NATION

6 dead, 8 injured as 4-storey building collapses in Delhi

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BUSINESS

FPIs infuse Rs 5,260 cr in Indian equities: NSDL

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SPORTS

Rahul slams his 2nd Test ton at Lord's

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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'Fuel cutoff shut engines, led to AI crash'

Report says fuel switches moved to cutoff position; Despite warning, AI failed to inspect them

NEW DELHI, 12 JULY

A preliminary report by India's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) has revealed that Air India flight AI171, a Boeing 787 Dreamliner, crashed within 30 seconds of takeoff from Ahmedabad airport on 12 June due to an unexplained simultaneous fuel cutoff to both engines.

The 15-page report confirms that the fuel supply to both engines was shut off within one second of each other, causing an immediate loss of thrust. The cockpit voice recorder captured one pilot asking the other, "Why did you cutoff?" to which the other responded, "I did not." The aircraft, bound for London, failed to climb and plunged into a medical college hostel, killing 241 of 242 onboard and 19 on the ground.

At the time, the co-pilot, Clive Kunder, 32, was flying the aircraft, while the captain, Sumeet Sabharwal, 56 — a veteran pilot and instructor with over 15,600 flight hours — was monitoring.

> **Let's not jump to any conclusions at this stage. Let us wait for the final report. These are technical things and that is why we have these investigation agencies. Once they are clear..., they are going to submit the final report. At this stage it will be very immature for me to comment on it**
>
>
>
> —K Ram Mohan Naidu, Union Aviation Minister

Both had passed pre-flight breathalyser tests and were seen on CCTV at the gate.

According to the report, both fuel control switches, used to shut off engines, were moved from RUN to CUTOFF position just after takeoff. The cockpit voice recordings and flight data show that a Ram Air Turbine (RAT) deployed moments later, indicating a total loss of engine power. About 10 seconds after the initial cutoff, Engine 1's switch was returned to RUN, followed by Engine 2 four seconds later. Engine 1 relit successfully, but Engine 2 failed to regain full power.

A distress call, "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday", was made but the aircraft crashed before air traffic control could respond.

Investigators found no evidence of fuel contamination. Fuel samples tested by the DGCA laboratory were deemed satisfactory. The wreckage and both engines were moved to a secure hangar for further examination.

Experts say it is highly unlikely for pilots to accidentally move both fuel switches, which require lifting a mechanical gate. The switches were found in RUN position at the wreckage site. The AAIB cited a 2018 US' Federal Aviation Administration bulletin warning about possible disengagement of the locking mechanism on Boeing 737 and 787 aircraft. However, the Air India jet had not been inspected for the issue as it was not mandatory and no defects had been reported since 2023.

The report did not identify who or what moved the switches or indicate any emergency that warranted an engine shutdown. For now, the AAIB has made no recommendations for Boeing 787-8 or GE GEnx-1B engine operators.

Boeing said it will "continue to support the investigation.

Air India said it was "working closely with stakeholders, including regulators." —*PTI*

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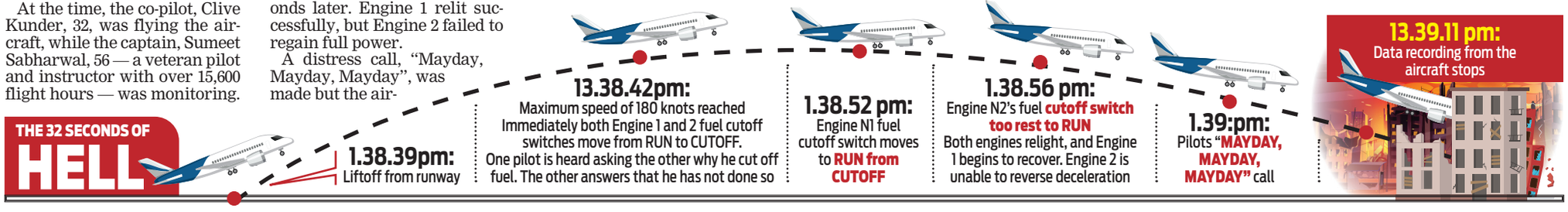
Investigators found no evidence of fuel contamination. Fuel samples tested by the DGCA laboratory were deemed satisfactory **PHOTO: PTI**


THE 32 SECONDS OF HELL
1.38.39pm: Liftoff from runway
13.38.42pm: Maximum speed of 180 knots reached Immediately both Engine 1 and 2 fuel cutoff switches move from RUN to CUTOFF. One pilot is heard asking the other why he cut off fuel. The other answers that he has not done so
1.38.52 pm: Engine N1 fuel cutoff switch moves to RUN from CUTOFF
1.38.56 pm: Engine N2's fuel cutoff switch too rest to RUN Both engines relight, and Engine 1 begins to recover. Engine 2 is unable to reverse deceleration
1.39:pm: Pilots "MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY" call
13.39.11 pm: Data recording from the aircraft stops

Jaishankar to visit China to attend SCO meet on 15 July

BEIJING, 12 JULY

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will visit China next week to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Tianjin on 15 July, the Chinese Foreign Ministry confirmed. Jaishankar is also expected to hold bilateral talks in Beijing on 13 July with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. This marks his first China visit since the 2020 Ladakh border standoff. Key issues likely to be discussed include normalising ties, easing border tensions, and China's restriction on rare earth exports. The visit follows recent trips by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and NSA Ajit Doval. Singh recently proposed a structured roadmap to resolve border issues. With the resumption of the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra and revived diplomatic mechanisms, both nations appear to be cautiously moving towards restoring relations strained since the Galwan clash. —*PTI*

FBI Chief Kash Patel may resign over Epstein files

BEIJING, 12 JULY

Amid the ongoing dispute over the probe into Jeffrey Epstein's death, FBI Chief Kash Patel says he might think about resigning in solidarity with Deputy Director Dan Bongino. The decision follows after the Bongino and Attorney General Pam Bondi had a falling out earlier this week after a dispute over the Department of Justice's (DOJ) investigation into the death of Epstein and the alleged "client list" According to sources, the conflict got heated following the news that the case would be handled by the US President Donald Trump's administration, along with a examination of the client list, which according to the officials, did not exist.DOJ concluded the 2019 Epstien's death case as a suicide, leading to the fallout. —*Agencies.*

Karnataka man arrested for raping IIM-Calcutta student

KOLKATA, 12 JULY

A second-year MBA student from Karnataka at IIM Calcutta has been arrested following allegations of rape made by a woman inside the institute's boys' hostel. In a dramatic twist, the woman's father later denied any assault had taken place, saying his daughter was "fine and resting."

The complainant, a psychological counsellor by profession, lodged a handwritten complaint at Haridevpur police station on Friday evening. She claimed she had visited the student's hostel to provide counselling after the two connected online. During lunch, she was allegedly offered pizza and water, after which she began feeling unwell, lost consciousness, and later realised she had been raped and tortured.

However, on Saturday afternoon, the woman's father told the media that no sexual assault had occurred. He said his daughter did not know the arrested student and had only gone to "submit a document."

He added he was informed around 9:34 p.m. on Friday that his daughter had fallen from an auto-rickshaw and lost consciousness. Police admitted her to SSKM Hospital's neurology department. "I've spoken to her. She said no one misbehaved with her," he said, adding she was currently sleeping and they had not spoken in detail yet. —*Agencies*

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Sexually harassed girl sets herself ablaze in Odisha college

BALASORE, 12 JULY

A college student in Balasore, Odisha, who had previously lodged a sexual harassment complaint against a teacher, tragically set herself on fire on the campus, suffering 90 per cent burn injuries. The incident occurred on Saturday after the student met with the Principal of Fakir Mohan (Autonomous) College, Dilip Ghosh.

The 20-year-old woman, a second-year student in the Integrated B. Ed programme, had been protesting for a week for action against the head of her department, alleging harassment. Following her meeting with the Principal, who reported counselling her for signs of distress, she was rushed to the District Headquarters Hospital, and subsequently referred to AIIMS Bhubaneswar for advanced treatment.

A male student who attempted to save her also sustained injuries in the incident. The accused teacher has since been detained by police, and an investigation is underway, led by local police officials.

Friends of the woman reported that she had experienced severe mental distress over the harassment allegations, feeling neglected by both college authorities and law enforcement regarding her complaint. —*PTI*

Leopard found dead near BRT, poison suspected

CHAMARAJANAGAR, 12 JULY

A leopard's carcass was discovered at a stone quarry near Kothalavadi village, which falls under the BRT Tiger Reserve, officials confirmed on Saturday. The male leopard, estimated to be around five to six years old, is suspected to have been poisoned. Forest department personnel also found the carcasses of a dog and a calf nearby on Thursday, suggesting the animals may have ingested poisoned bait.

A senior forest official stated that a post-mortem had been conducted and samples were sent to the forensic laboratory in Mysuru for analysis. "Based on the results, we will proceed with appropriate action," the official added.

A case has been registered and an investigation is underway. This incident follows closely after the death of a tigress and her four cubs on 26 June in the Hugyam range of MM Hills, raising serious concerns over the increasing cases of wildlife poisoning in protected areas of Karnataka. —*PTI*

IGA CROWNED WIMBLEDON QUEEN

PHOTO: X/@WIMBLEDON

Iga Swiatek claimed her first Wimbledon crown with a commanding 6-0, 6-0 win over Amanda Anisimova—the first women's final shutout at the tournament since 1911. The 24-year-old Pole captured her sixth Grand Slam title in just 57 minutes. Anisimova, appearing in her first major final, struggled with 28 unforced errors. Despite the loss, she will enter the WTA top 10 for the first time. Swiatek's win also marks her first professional title on grass

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'NO REGARD FOR ENVIRONMENT?'

India eases sulphur emission rules for coal plants

NEW DELHI, 12 JULY

The Central government has relaxed sulphur dioxide (SO) emission norms for coal-based thermal power plants, fully exempting those located outside critically polluted areas or cities with populations over one million.

In a notification dated 11 July, the environment ministry extended compliance deadlines for flue gas desulphurisation (FGD) installation—a mandate originally estimated at $30 billion. Category A plants, within 10 km of the National Capital Region or major cities, now have until December 2027, up from the earlier December 2024 deadline.

Category B plants, near critically polluted areas or non-attainment cities, will be evaluated case-by-case, replacing the previous December 2025 deadline. Category C plants, located elsewhere, are entirely exempt if they meet stack height criteria, scrapping the earlier 2026 compliance target.

FGD units are crucial in reducing SO , which converts to PM2.5—linked to respiratory diseases and millions of deaths annually. The ministry cited factors such as limited technology access, COVID-19 supply chain disruptions, cost escalations, low ambient SO levels, and electricity price concerns for the relaxation.

The Ministry of Power explicitly recommended the exemption. A Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) committee reviewed studies on SO 's contribution to air pollution, water and energy use, and carbon footprint impacts from FGD operations.

Following wide stakeholder consultations, the CPCB advised a targeted approach focusing on densely populated and pollution-sensitive areas, weighing environmental, economic, and technical considerations. —*PTI*

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Priceless & Most Beautiful Jewellery From India's Top 50 Jewellers
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Entry & Valet Parking Free / Scan For Venue Direction
FINE GOLD JEWELLERY | DIAMOND JEWELLERY | PLATINUM JEWELLERY | TRADITIONAL JEWELLERY
WEDDING JEWELLERY | PRECIOUS STONE JEWELLERY | KUNDAN & POLKI JEWELLERY | LAB GROWN DIAMONDS

3 tiger cubs die in Bannerghatta Park

BENGALURU, 12 JULY

Three tiger cubs born at Bannerghatta Biological Park (BBP) have died after their mother, tigress Hima Das, allegedly abandoned them shortly after birth, officials confirmed on Saturday. The cubs, part of Hima's third litter, were born on 7 July but sustained injuries after the tigress failed to care for them. Despite being moved to the zoo hospital for intensive care and hand-rearing, one male cub died on 8 July, followed by the deaths of another male and a female cub the next day. "A post-mortem was conducted by the veterinary team. One male cub died due to cervical injury due to stamping, another male cub died due to injuries to brain tissue and meningeal hematoma caused as a result of the mother's biting on its head, while the female cub succumbed to stamping," the BBP said in a statement. "In captivity, many times the cubs are abandoned by the mothers due to the lack of maternal instincts". *—PTI*

Doctor arrested for drug peddling in Mangaluru

MANGALURU, 12 JULY

Mangaluru City Police have arrested a doctor in connection with a drug peddling case, making it the ninth arrest in an ongoing investigation into a local narcotics supply network, officials said on Saturday. City Police Commissioner Sudheer Kumar Reddy identified the accused as Prajwal Peenyas, a native of Mangalapet in Bidar district and currently residing in Kodipalya, Kengeri, Bengaluru. He had three previous cases. Police alleged that Peenyas played a key role in sourcing drugs from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh and distributing them. *—ANI*

Davanagere man bites off wife's nose during scuffle

DAVANAGERE, 12 JULY

A shocking case of domestic violence has emerged from Mantaraghatta village in Davanagere district in the State where a man allegedly bit off his wife's nose during a heated argument over loan repayment. The incident took place on 8 July and involved 30-year-old Vidya and her husband Vijay. During the dispute regarding a loan instalment, Vijay subjected Vidya to verbal abuse and physical assault. The situation escalated, leading to Vijay biting off the front portion of her nose. Local residents intervened and rushed Vidya to Channagiri Government Hospital for treatment, after which she was transferred to Meggan Hospital in Shivamogga due to the severity of her injuries. Vidya has filed a complaint against Vijay at the Channagiri police station. Police are actively searching for the accused. *—ANI*

Malviya, Surjewala spar over Delhi trip

Malviya says CM was 'humiliated' by Rahul; Surjewala calls him a 'bizarre whackho'

BENGALURU, 12 JULY

A war of words ensued between Congress General Secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala and BJP IT cell Chief Amit Malviya over Chief Minister Siddaramaiah Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar recent visit to Delhi.

Malviya, in his post on X, alleged that Siddaramaiah faced "humiliation" in Delhi, claiming he was denied an appointment by Congress MP Rahul Gandhi.

Malviya wrote, "He (Siddaramaiah) travelled all the way to the capital, only to be denied an appointment by Rahul—and has now returned without even a meeting."

He also drew a parallel with the past, referencing how former Prime Minister late Rajiv Gandhi had sacked Veerendra Patil, calling it a historic insult to a State leader.

Malviya further claimed that Siddaramaiah was now "forced to hide behind the very man plotting against him— Shivakumar," alluding to the alleged internal power struggle.

Responding strongly, Surjewala accused Malviya of peddling lies.

Congress General Secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala and BJP IT cell Chief Amit Malviya **PHOTO:PTI**

Surjewala, in his post on X, described Malviya as "a bizarre whacko" and said the BJP was facing a fratricidal crisis in State.

He stated that Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar had visited Delhi to urge the Union government to address Karnataka's concerns and alleged that the Modi government had consistently shown "inimical hatred" towards the State.

Surjewala listed several pending issues, including alleged denial of funds, refusal to notify the award of the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-2 and a lack of clearances for major irrigation projects, such as Upper Bhadra, Yettinahole, Kalasa-Banduri, and Mekedatu.

On the other hand, Siddaramaiah said his primary purpose in Delhi was to discuss Mysuru's Dasara Air Show with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. He defended Rahul, saying he was committed to bring positive change to State. *—PTI/ANI*

Change can occur anytime: Tanveer Sait

Mysuru, 12 July

KPCC Working President Tanveer Sait said that political change can happen any time and he will not reply to questions over party matters. However, he asserted that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will complete the full five-year term. He added that the High Command asked Congress leaders not to comment over the CM change.

—Salar News

DKS SAYS, 'DIFFICULT TO FIND A CHAIR'; REIGNITES CM POST SPECULATIONS

BENGALURU, 12 JULY

After Chief Minister Siddaramaiah ruled out any change in leadership and asserted he would complete his full term, State Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar stirred speculation with a metaphor-laden remark, saying, "It is difficult to find a chair. When you find a chair, you have to come and sit on the raft."

Shivakumar made the remark while inaugurating the Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Jayanti celebrations organised by the Bangalore Bar Association on Friday.

"There are so many chairs, come and sit. It is difficult to find a chair. When you find a chair, you have to come and sit on the raft. If you look at yourself, you look like tyagis," he said, addressing lawyers present at the event.

During the event, Shivakumar also announced a series of measures to support the Bar Association, including the allocation of 10 acres of land, financial grants, and annual awards in the name of Kempegowda.

He said Rs 5 crore would be provided from the Greater Bangalore Authority (GBA) for the association's development, Rs 5 lakh annually for Kempegowda Jayanti celebrations, and two lawyers would be honoured each year with the Kempegowda Award.

—PTI/ANI

WORLD IS YOUR CANVAS

Students paint on a compound wall for the beautification of Manekshaw Parade Grounds, on Cubbon Road in Bengaluru, on Saturday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

ISRO completes development of Propulsion System for Gaganyaan

BENGALURU, 12 JULY

ISRO on Saturday said it has successfully completed the development of Service Module Propulsion System (SMPS) for Gaganyaan Mission with the completion of the qualification test programme.

A full duration hot test of SMPS for 350 seconds was conducted to validate the integrated performance of the SMPS for flight off-nominal mission profile of the Service Module based mission abort on Friday.

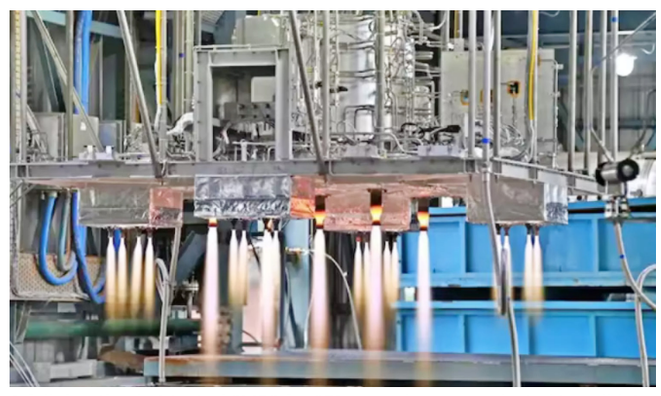
Gaganyaan mission is India's first human spaceflight mission in the making.

"The overall performance of the propulsion system during the hot test was normal as per pre-test predictions," ISRO said in a statement.

According to the space agency, "The Service Module (SM) of Gaganyaan is a regulated bi-propellant based propulsion system that caters to the requirements of the Orbital Module for orbit circularisation, on-orbit control, de-boost manoeuvring and Service Module based abort during the ascent phase."

The Liquid Apogee Motor (LAM) engines provide the main propulsive force during the orbit circularisation and de-boost phases, while the Reaction Control System (RCS) thrusters ensures precise attitude control, it added.

"A System Demonstration Model (SDM) test bed was realised emulating the fluid circuit of the SMPS, encompassing the propellant tank feed system, helium pressurisation system, flight-qualified thrusters, and control components," ISRO said. *—PTI*



A full duration hot test of SMPS for 350 seconds was conducted to validate its integrated performance **PHOTO:X/ISRO**

BMTC launches new tech for visually impaired

BENGALURU, 12 JULY

The Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) has begun implementing a new assistive device called OnBoard across its fleet to ensure greater independence and safety for visually impaired commuters.

The system uses a two-part communication mechanism -- a handheld remote for the user and a unit installed in the bus.

When a bus nears a stop, the user presses the 'Find' button, triggering an audio announcement of the route number through a speaker on the bus.

If it matches the intended route, pressing 'Select' alerts the driver and conductor, who then assist the commuter in boarding and alighting.

BMTC approved installation of OnBoard devices in 500 buses, with the deployment to be completed by August. *—PTI*

2 field operators killed in Mangaluru gas leak

MANGALURU, 12 JULY

Two field operators of Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL) died following a suspected leak of hazardous vapours atop a storage tank in the Oil Movement Area of the facility on Saturday morning, officials said.

According to MRPL officials, the experienced operators -- Deep Chandra Bhartiya, 33, was a native of Prayagraj, and Bijil Prasad, 33, was from Kerala-- had climbed the platform of a tank around 8am to check a suspected level malfunction.

- The experienced operators had climbed the platform of a tank around 8am to check a suspected level malfunction. They were later found unconscious on the roof

Later, both were found unconscious on the tank roof and were shifted to the company's first aid unit before being moved to a nearby hospital. However, they died.

A third operator, Vinayak Myageri, who attempted to rescue the duo, has been hospitalised and is reported to be in stable condition, the officials said.

A case will be registered based on statements from the victims' families or relatives, said Mangaluru City Police Commissioner Sudhir Kumar Reddy.

The leakage has since been sealed by MRPL's fire and safety team, who have declared the area safe.

MRPL has constituted a high-level committee comprising Group General Managers to investigate the incident.

The cause of the incident is yet to be determined. *– PTI*

Couple sell newborn to repay Rs3L loan; 4 held

SHIRASI, 12 JULY

A couple from Dandeli in Uttara Kannada district has been arrested for allegedly selling their 20-day-old baby boy for 3 lakh to repay a private loan. Two individuals from Belagavi who bought the child were also taken into custody on Saturday.

The couple, residents of Deshpande Nagar in old Dandeli town, delivered the baby at the government hospital in Dandeli on 17 June. They had taken a loan from private financial firms with weekly repayment terms. As they were unable to repay, they were reportedly harassed regularly for payments.

To escape the pressure, the couple allegedly sold the infant in Dharwad on 8 July to Noor Muhammad Abdulmajid and Kishan Srikant Irekar, both from Belagavi.

The case came to light when Anganwadi worker Reshma Mahadev Pavaskar, who had earlier provided the Taayi Card (mother card) to the couple for accessing government benefits, noticed the baby was no longer at home. Suspicious, she informed the Dandeli Town Police.

The police arrested the couple and the two buyers. The baby has been placed in the care of the Child Welfare Committee in Shirasi.

—Salar News

SUBSTANDARD PRACTICES

FSDA suspended 133 drug licences, cancelled 20 in June

BENGALURU, 12 JULY

Enforcement officers of the Karnataka Food Safety and Drug Administration department suspended 133 drug licences and cancelled 20 drug licences in June for violations of the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, officials have said.

The move was initiated after the officials concerned conducted 2,544 inspections over the last month, they said.

According to the department, drug-testing laboratories in City, Hubballi and Ballari analysed 1,333 samples in June. Among those, 1,292 samples were declared as "Standard Quality" and 41 as "Not of Standard Quality".

From April to June, the enforcement officers filed a total of 81 cases in courts against firms that violated the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and the Rules thereunder, the department said.

The department has ensured that "Not of Standard Quality" drugs worth more than Rs 40 lakh were recalled from the market and seized.

A special drive was conducted across the blood centres in the state and a total of 122 such centres were inspected.

- Drug-testing laboratories in City, Hubballi and Ballari analysed 1,333 samples in June. Among those, 1,292 samples were declared as 'Standard Quality' and 41 as 'Not of Standard Quality,' the Karnataka Food Safety and Drug Administration said

"Based on the various violations observed, show-cause notices were issued to 44 blood centres and compliance letters were issued to 80 blood centres," the department said in a statement issued on Friday.

According to the statement, in compliance with the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, food safety, quality and hygiene aspects were inspected across the state, covering 1,557 street-food vendors, in June.

Notices were issued to 406 establishments where violations were identified and fines totalling Rs 44,500 were imposed on the spot, the statement added. *—PTI*

Woman pushes husband into river during photoshoot

RAICHUR, 12 JULY

A woman allegedly pushed her husband into the Krishna River the under the pretext of a photoshoot, near the Gurjapur Bridge-cum-Barrage in Raichur taluk. The woman reportedly asked her husband to pose at the edge of the bridge for a photo, and once he was at the very edge, she pushed him into the river.

Due to the strong currents of the Krishna River, the man was carried a short distance downstream.

However, being a good swimmer, he managed to save himself by climbing onto a rock in the middle of the river.

Hearing his screams, local residents rushed to the spot and carried out a two-hour rescue operation using a rope available in nearby fields, ultimately saving the man. After being rescued, the man alleged that his wife had deliberately pushed him into the river. However, the woman claimed that her husband had accidentally slipped and fell. Some eyewitnesses confirmed that the woman indeed pushed the man. *—Salar News*

Russian woman, 2 daughters rescued from Gokarna cave

KARWAR, 12 JULY

A spiritually inclined Russian woman and her two young children were rescued from a remote cave nestled in the serene yet treacherous Ramatirtha hills of Kumta taluk in Uttara Kannada district, a police officer said on Saturday.

Police identified the woman as 40-year-old Nina Kutina, who had journeyed from Russia to India on a business visa and found her way to the sacred coastal town of Gokarna via Goa, drawn deeply by the Hinduism and Indian spiritual traditions.

Her children, Preya, 6, and Ama, 4, had accompanied her into the heart of the forest, where they had been living in complete seclusion for nearly two weeks.

It was during a routine patrol on Friday, following a recent landslide that Circle Police Inspector Sridhar and his team spotted clothes hanging outside the cave.

Curious and cautious, the officers made their way through the thick shrubs of Ramatirtha Hill and found Mohi and her two children in the cave.

Her visa had expired in 2017. How long she was living in India remains unclear, police said.

The Russian Embassy was contacted and formalities began to deport her. *—PTI*

Cops order inquiry after Chirag gets death threat

PATNA, 12 JULY

Union minister Chirag Paswan has received a death threat from an Instagram user, his Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) said on Saturday. The party also shared the screenshot of a complaint lodged with Patna cyber police. Citing a post by one 'Tiger Meraj Idrisi,' the party's chief spokesman, Rajesh Bhatt, alleged that the user had betrayed "a criminal bent of mind" and seemed "upset with the growing popularity of our leader". The party has urged both the central and state governments to ensure that the culprit is brought to justice. *—PTI*

7 yrs in jail, no bail: M'rashtra bill targets extremists

MUMBAI, 12 JULY

Imprisonment of up to seven years, a fine of up to Rs 5 lakh, and classification of offences registered under it as cognisable and non-bailable are key features of a special bill passed by the Maharashtra legislature to curb activities of Left-wing extremist organisations. The Maharashtra Special Public Security Bill, 2024 has introduced strict measures against individuals and organisations involved in activities declared as "unlawful". Since all offences under the law are cognisable and non-bailable, the police can arrest individuals without a warrant, and courts are not obliged to grant bail, the bill states. *—PTI*

Beware of those dividing Hindus, Sikhs: Yogi

LUCKNOW, 12 JULY

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday claimed attempts were being made to drive a wedge between the Hindus and Sikhs, and urged the people to be wary of such actions. He also claimed that the arrested Chhangur Baba of Balrampur had fixed rates for religious conversions, leading to transactions to the tune of Rs 100 crore. Speaking at the flagging-off of UP-Delhi Balidan Sandesh Yatra, he said that team has been dispatched to Pilibhit to conduct 'ghar wapsi' (returning to original faith) of the converted. The UP Anti-Terrorism Squad arrested Jalaluddin alias Chhangur Baba and Neetu alias Nasreen, both natives of Madhpur in Balrampur district, for allegedly running a massive conversion racket. *—PTI*

'Centre, State trying to save nurse in Yemen'

NEW DELHI, 12 JULY

Tomy Thomas, husband of Nimisha Priya, the 37-year-old Indian nurse from Kerala who faces execution in Yemen on 16 July, after being convicted of murder in June 2018, shared the ongoing efforts to save her life. Thomas met with the Kerala Governor, Rajendra Arlekar, recently, who offered support to Nimisha's mother through video conferencing. According to Thomas, the Central government, the State government, and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) are making efforts to secure Nimisha's release. While speaking to ANI, Thomas said, "I am in contact with Nimisha. It is possible to send text and voice messages to her." The Central government, State government and the MEA have been making efforts, and we expect a positive response. Our advocate is doing everything possible....", Thomas added. *—ANI*

AI crash: Experts blame mechanical issue

Fuel switches are generally used if both engines flameout, says former Air India pilot

MUMBAI, 12 JULY

The Air India aircraft, which crashed soon after takeoff, might have suffered mechanical or power supply issues that could have led to the change in the position of the switches that feed fuel into the plane, according to experts.

They also opined that the reasons for the change in fuel switch position will be known during further investigations.

Sharing his expert opinion on the AAIB's preliminary report on the fuel switches, Federation of Indian Pilots (FPI) President and former Air India pilot Captain CS Randhawa said the position of the fuel switches can be changed only with a human interface.

These switches are spring-loaded and have a lock. If they have to be put into RUN position, then first, it has to be pulled out and moved into the position, he said.

When are switches used?

According to him, the switches are generally used in case there has been a flameout of both engines or the pilots have recycled the switches.

"When the fuel control switch has to be cut off, the pilot flying will say, fuel control switch left, confirm. So, after the confirmation is made by the second pilot, the pilot monitoring will cut off (the switch)," Randhawa explained.

In this case, however, "the first officer was taking off the aircraft, and the captain was pilot monitoring. Now, did this transfer of controls take place between the captain and the first officer? It is not clear from the report at all," he noted.

A former Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) official said there was a change in the position of the fuel switches, and the question is why it happened.

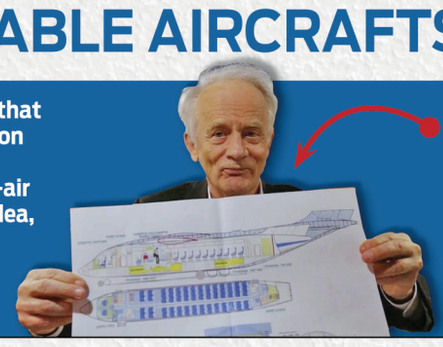
Pilots seek fair, fact-based probe

The Airline Pilots' Association of India has demanded a fair and fact-based probe into the crash, as it claimed that the tone and direction of the investigation into it suggests a bias towards pilot error.

The association has also demanded that its representatives should be observers in the investigation process to ensure transparency and accountability. *—Agencies*

COULD DETACHABLE AIRCRAFTS SAVE LIVES?

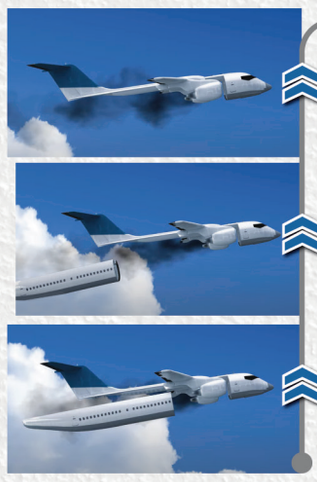
In the wake of the air India flight 171 crash that killed over 270 people, a 10-year-old aviation concept has gone viral: a detachable passenger cabin designed to separate mid-air and land safely in emergencies. The bold idea, developed by Ukrainian engineer, is being hailed as a breakthrough in crash survival technology. Here are the details:



- Pioneered by Ukrainian aerospace engineer Tatarenko Vladimir Nikolaevich.
- Worked on the design for 3 years; made it public via YouTube in 2016.
- Now, he is seeking investors such as Airbus or Boeing.

WHAT ARE DETACHABLE PLANES?

- Aircraft with a separable passenger cabin.
- In an emergency such as engine failure or mid-air explosions, the cabin detaches from the main fuselage.
- Designed to land safely using parachutes, air cushions, or glide systems and shock absorber.



HOW DO DETACHABLE PLANES WORK?

- Built with strong yet light materials such as Kevlar and Carbon fibre.
- Pilots must push a button to initiate detaching.
- Parachutes open automatically, to slow the descent of the cabin.
- Inflatable tubes help the cabin float upon water landing.
- Passenger luggage, stored below the cabin will also detach.

PILOTS LEFT BEHIND?

This design only saves passengers as cockpit and pilots stay with the aircraft not the detachable cabins.

THE HIGH COST

With aircraft such the boeing 787 or airbus a350 costing $100–$350 million, developing planes with detachable cabins could be exorbitant and strain airline budgets significantly.

THE CONS

- The detachment system may weaken the aircraft's structure.
- The detachable cabin could hit mountains or buildings, instead of a flat surface.
- Without pilots or aircraft's wings, it cannot be steered to a safe landing.

RESEARCH: SAARIYAH IRAM

Month after crash, fliers still anxious

AHMEDABAD, 12 JULY

Gajanand Pandya sat on a bench for three hours outside the airport until Air India flight AI 159 to London took off on Saturday. His daughter, son-in-law, and granddaughter were onboard, and he couldn't bring himself to leave earlier. Exactly a month ago, flight AI 171 had crashed shortly after take-off, killing 241 onboard and 19 on ground.

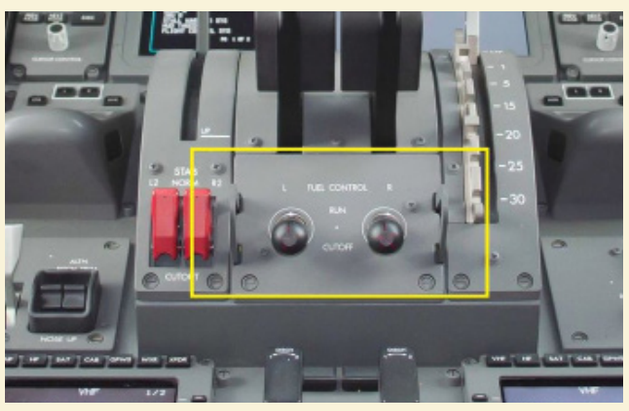
Once AI 159 was airborne, Pandya took a taxi back to Bhavnagar, 150 km away. "They came to spend time with us and went back today on the same flight. I stayed back at the airport because I was worried. Though such plane crashes are rare, it's natural for a father to be concerned," he said.

Flight AI 171 - suspended after the Dreamliner crash - resumed service on 16 June under a new code - AI 159.

On Saturday, as AI 159 departed at 1.08 pm, anxiety lingered; not just for Pandya but also for people like Bhartiben and Rajesh Prajapati whose daughter was flying back to London.

"We are nervous because it's the same flight that crashed," Bhartiben said.

Rajesh Prajapati was far more poised, asserting that no one can reach anywhere if people start latching on to such tragedies. *—PTI*



DID FUEL SWITCH ERROR SEAL THE FATE OF AIR INDIA PLANE?

NEW DELHI, 12 JULY

The AAIB's preliminary probe report on the fatal Air India plane accident has put the spotlight on the fuel switches of the crashed Boeing 787-8 and the confusion among the two pilots over the switches being cut off.

According to a veteran pilot, the fuel switches regulate the flow of fuel into an aircraft's engines. The switch has two positions -- 'RUN' and 'CUT OFF' -- and are used to start or shut down engines. Fuel switches are generally guarded with brackets to prevent accidental movements. The switches have to be first pulled up before changing their position, the pilot said.

- The switch has two positions -- 'RUN' and 'CUT OFF' -- and are used to start or shut down engines.Fuel switches are generally guarded with brackets to prevent accidental movements.

Fuel switches in the crashed plane

In a Boeing 787 Dreamliner, the fuel switches are located under the thrust levers. In the case of AI 171 flight, the fuel switches to the engines of aircraft were cut off within a gap of one second and later, they were switched on. Now, when the engine starts, it is a two-step procedure where start selector is put on & then fuel control is put to run mode.

"What may have happened is that, at the point of wanting to do gear up., switches in both engines were either deliberately or inadvertently put off. So everyone forgot about the gear," he explained. *—PTI*

'Hooligans controling Kerala varsities'

T'PURAM, 12 JULY

Kerala University Vice-Chancellor Mohanan Kunnummal on Saturday made grave allegations against the Left-dominated syndicate, student and youth outfits of the ruling CPI(M) and accused them of threatening to physically attack him if he enters varsity campus here.

He also accused them of threatening the university staff with dire consequences if they obey his directives and send him files.

In an interview with PTI, Kunnummal, a medical doctor, alleged that the law and order situation has collapsed in the university and "hooligans" were trying to control it using "muscle power."

If I go there (campus), there will be violence. Police will beat students, and the law enforcers will also get injured. Why should I create such a situation?

-Kerala University VC Mohanan Kunnummal

He also alleged that a group of DYFI-SFI activists came to attack him at his wife's house in Shasthamangalam in the city two days ago, thinking that he was there, but were prevented by the police.

His statement came a day after SFI activists, who recently stormed the University raising slogans against him, continued their protests.

What led to the drama?

The action came after the Registrar issued a notice cancelling a private programme attended by the Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar at the Senate Hall, where a portrait of Bharat Mata holding a saffron flag was displayed. *—PTI*

Bihar polls: INDIA bloc begins seat-sharing talks

NEW DELHI, 12 JULY

INDIA bloc partners in Bihar on Saturday held a marathon brainstorming session to discuss sharing of seats in the State Assembly polls due later this year.

The meeting, held at the residence of Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly, Tejashwi Yadav, continued for nearly six hours.

Later, Yadav, who heads the coalition's coordination committee, briefly interacted with journalists.

"Yes, seat-sharing talks have begun. But I cannot divulge more details now. The deliberations are an internal matter and we will make things public when things are finalised," said the RJD leader, who is likely to be the INDIA bloc's CM candidate.

The former deputy chief minister also alleged that the NDA government headed by JD(U) president Nitish Kumar was a "copycat" which was "stealing" his ideas like setting up a youth commission and hiking old age pension.

Yadav claimed that the people were fed up with the NDA government, which lacked "vision" and was unable to keep law and order under control. *—PTI*

Ajith's death: TN cops face murder charge

NEW DELHI, 12 JULY

The CBI on Saturday booked police personnel in Tamil Nadu's Sivagangai district for murder in connection with the custodial death of temple guard Ajit Kumar and took over the probe, officials said.

The investigation into the matter was transferred to the federal agency by the Tamil Nadu government.

The case was filed under section 103 (murder) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, a spokesperson from the CBI said in a statement.

"The CBI has registered a case against police personnel of Sivagangai District, Tamil Nadu, in connection with the alleged custodial death of Shri Ajit Kumar, who was posted as a temple guard at Madapuram Temple," the official said.

Ajit Kumar
PHOTO: PTI

'Brought dead' a day after arrest

Kumar, 29, worked as a security guard at the Bhadrakaliamman Temple in Tiruppuvanam. He was picked up by the police on 27 June for interrogation in connection with a jewel theft case. The next night, he was declared "brought dead" by police at a government hospital.

The post-mortem revealed that Kumar had about 44 external injuries on his legs, arms, abdomen, and chest – at least 19 of them deep and extended up to the muscles.

The death could have occurred about 12-24 hours before post mortem, the report by forensic surgeons of the Madurai Medical College Hospital said, but did not specify the exact cause of death pending further histopathological examination. *—PTI*

'PLAN TO EXPORT HINDUTVA'

Take your blood money to Hindustan: Pannun warns Kapil

BENGALURU, 12 JULY

The founder of Sikhs for Justice – a pro-Khalistan separatist group, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, allegedly warned Indian comedian Kapil Sharma on Saturday over the recent attack on his cafe in Canada.

According to reports, Pannun had allegedly threatened Sharma, stating that Canada is not his playground, asking him to take his blood money back to Hindustan.

Punnan added that Canada doesn't tolerate Hindutva ideologies being cultivated in the country in the pretext of business, questioning whether

Kapil Sharma PHOTO: PTI

Sharma's new cafe in Canada is "just a comedy venue or part of a larger strategy to export Hindutva."

In 2019, the Ministry of Home Affairs had claimed Pannun was an individual terrorist.

His warning comes after the recent attack on Sharma's newly opened cafe in Surrey, British Columbia.

The attackers were later identified as Harjit Singh Laddi and Toofan Singh.

According to a report, they are connected to the Babbar Khalsa International (BKI), a terrorist organisation.

The café posted a message regarding the incident stating their intent for the café was to bring warmth and joy by sharing good coffee and warm conversations. *—Agencies*

BJP office important than having CM: Shah in Kerala

T'PURAM, 12 JULY

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday that ensuring BJP's Kerala office becomes the centre of "Vikasit Keralam" is important to the saffron party even more than having a CM in government.

Shah made the statement while addressing a massive gathering of party activists and supporters at a ward-level leadership meeting after inaugurating the new BJP state committee office. Shah also launched the logo and motto of the party's "Vikasit Keralam" mission. He said that the route to "Vikasit Bharat" goes through "Vikasit Keralam" .

He also launched BJP's campaign for the upcoming local body polls this year and the Assembly elections next year.

Ahead of his arrival, the use of drones, paragliders or any other unmanned aerial vehicles were banned in a five-kilometre radius. *—PTI*

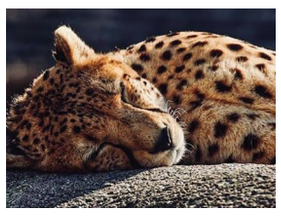


PHOTO: PTI

Female cheetah dies of injuries in MP national park

SHEOPUR, 12 JULY

An eight-year-old female cheetah named Nabha, brought to Kuno National Park (KNP) from Namibia, has died from injuries likely sustained during a hunting attempt in her soft release enclosure. Nabha suffered fractures in both her left ulna and fibula, along with other wounds, and was under treatment for a week. A post-mortem will determine the exact cause. Following her death, KNP now has 26 cheetahs—nine adults (six females and three males) and 17 cubs, all reported to be healthy. Sixteen are in the wild and adapting well, regularly hunting and coexisting with co-predators. Two males relocated to Gandhisagar are also doing well. Anti-parasitic treatment was administered to all cheetahs. —*PTI*

Abduction foiled as girl stabs driver with compass

THANE, 12 JULY

A 16-year-old schoolgirl in Bhiwandi in Maharashtra' Thane district foiled an attempted kidnapping on 9 July. While travelling to school in an autorickshaw, she noticed a suspicious man already inside. As they neared her school, the driver ignored her request to stop. Realising the danger, she used a geometry compass from her school bag to stab the driver and pushed the other man away before jumping out of the moving vehicle. She safely reached her school and informed her mother, who then informed the police. A case has been registered. Police have launched an investigation into the incident. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Andhra railway station gets sleeping pods

VISAKHAPATNAM, 12 JULY

In a first for the East Coast Railway Zone, Waltair Division has introduced sleeping pods at Visakhapatnam station in Andhra Pradesh under the Non-Fare Revenue model. Located at Platform 1, Gate 3, the capsule hotel offers affordable, hygienic accommodation for travellers — no ticket required. The facility has 88 beds, 73 single, 15 double, and 18 for women in a secure, private section with modern bathrooms and a dressing room. Amenities include hot water, free Wi-Fi, a snack bar, spacious bathrooms, and a travel desk. Rates start at Rs 200 for a single pod (three hours). Online booking may be introduced, and the pods are monitored by CCTV. —*PTI*

Nagaland reports 9 Japanese Encephalitis cases

KOHIMA, 12 JULY

Nine cases of Japanese Encephalitis (JE) have been reported in Nagaland this year, prompting the state's health department to issue a public advisory. JE is a serious viral illness spread by Culex mosquitoes, which breed in stagnant water such as paddy fields and ponds. The disease can cause brain inflammation, leading to severe complications or death. While pigs act as amplifying hosts, JE does not spread between humans. For every symptomatic case, hundreds more may go undetected. With no specific antiviral treatment, early detection and supportive care are vital. Authorities urged people with sudden fever, headache, or confusion to seek medical help. Districts are boosting surveillance, fogging, immunisation, and public awareness. —*PTI*

A student of the IIM-Calcutta, accused in the alleged rape of woman student inside a hostel of the business school, being produced at a city court, in Kolkata in West Bengal on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

Student raped in IIM-Calcutta hostel

Victim was allegedly given drug-laced drinks

KOLKATA, 12 JULY

A woman studying at the Indian Institute of Management-Calcutta was allegedly raped by a student inside a hostel of the business school, police said on Saturday.

The accused has been arrested on the basis of an FIR lodged by the woman at Haridevpur Police Station.

The alleged incident inside the boys' hostel of IIM-Calcutta took place on 11 July, a police officer said.

"The woman stated in the FIR that she was called to the hostel for a counselling session. She then became unconscious after consuming a drink laced with drugs at the hostel. She realised she had been raped after regaining consciousness," he said.

She also alleged that the accused had threatened her with dire consequences if she disclosed the matter to anyone, the officer said.

"The accused student was detained last night before being formally arrested," he said.

Further investigation is underway.

The development comes almost a fortnight after a student was allegedly gangraped inside a law college in Kolkata.

In another incident, a 14-year-old girl was raped and impregnated allegedly by her schoolmate in Bhiwandi in Maharashtra's Thane district.

Based on a complaint, the police on 10 July registered a case under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act against the boy, who is also 14 years old.

He said that both the girl and the accused live in the same locality and attend the same school.

The assault took place in May when the accused allegedly called the girl to his house and raped her. She was later found to be pregnant.

A probe is underway, and no one has been detained in the case so far. —*PTI*

Indian legal system in need of fixing: CJI Gavai

HYDERABAD, 12 JULY

The Indian legal system has been facing unique challenges and is badly in need of fixing, Chief Justice of India BR Gavai said on Saturday.

Delivering a convocation address at the Nalsar University of Law at Justice City in Telangana's Hyderabad, Justice Gavai said, "Even though I conclude that our legal system is badly in need of fixing, I remain cautiously optimistic that my fellow citizens will rise to the challenges," CJI Gavai said.

"Our country and legal system are facing unique challenges. Delays in trials can sometimes go for decades. We have seen cases where someone has been found innocent after spending years in jail as an undertrial. Our best talent can help us resolve the problems that we are facing," he further said.

Justice Gavai advised students to go abroad for studies on scholarships, not to put pressure on family finances.

He advised the passing out graduates to seek mentors not for their power, but for integrity. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and Supreme Court judge Justice PS Narasimha also participated in the convocation, while acting Chief Justice of Telangana High Court Justice Sujoy Paul presided over the convocation. —*PTI*

SC to hear on tricolour's use in politics events

NEW DELHI, 12 JULY

The Supreme Court will hear on 14 July a plea seeking directions to the Centre and the Election Commission to take effective steps to prevent any political party or religious group from using the national flag for "partisan or religious purposes".

The plea also sought directions to strictly enforce provisions to ensure that the national flag is treated with utmost respect.—*PTI*

Hunt on for man days after Gujarat bridge collapse

VADODARA, 12 JULY

Search and rescue operations continue in Gujarat's Vadodara following a devastating bridge collapse that claimed 20 lives. Efforts resumed for the fourth day on Saturday to recover the body of a man still missing in the Mahisagar River.

The incident happened when a section of the 40-year-old bridge near Gambhira village collapsed, causing several vehicles to plunge into the water. The operations focused on extricating a large slab and a tanker carrying sulphuric acid. Preliminary investigations suggest the collapse resulted from "crushing of pedestal and articulation joints." Four engineers were suspended in connection with the incident. —*PTI*

TRAINED IN HIRED COURTS

'Dead tennis player had no academy'

GURUGRAM, 12 JULY

Radhika Yadav, a 25-year-old former state-level tennis player, was allegedly shot dead by her father, Deepak Yadav, 49, at their home in Sector 57, Gurugram, on Thursday. According to police, Radhika did not run a tennis academy but trained aspiring players by booking courts at various locations — a practice her father strongly objected to.

Initially believed to be upset over financial dependence, Deepak, who has substantial rental income, was reportedly distressed by his daughter's coaching work and refused to accept it as a legitimate career. Police now say this disagreement was the primary cause of conflict, not financial issues or her social media presence.

Radhika was shot four times — three bullets in the back and one in the shoulder — suggesting an element of premeditation. Deepak confessed to the murder during police interrogation. Investigators recovered five bullets and a live cartridge from the house and took him to Pataudi village as part of the inquiry.

Contrary to online speculation, the police have confirmed that a 2023 music video featuring Radhika had no link to her death. —*PTI*

6 dead, 8 injured as 4-storey building collapses in Delhi

Debris of a four-storey building that collapsed at Welcome area, in New Delhi on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

NEW DELHI, 12 JULY

SIx people including an eight-year-old girl died and eight others were injured when a four-storey building collapsed in the Welcome area of north-east Delhi on Saturday morning, with a few still feared to be trapped under the rubble.

The bodies of the building's owner, Matloob and his wife, Rabia were pulled out of the debris. Their two sons, daughter-in-law and grandson sustained injuries.

Eight people have been rushed to the GTB Hopsital treatment, while attempts to rescue others who are still be trapped in the debris are still underway.

The building's ground floor and first floor were unoccupied. The building opposite also sustained damage. Four more people residing in the opposite building were also hospitalised after they sustained injuries.

The building collapsed when locals were out on their morning walks, many of whom acted as first responders and began trying to rescue those trapped before fire officials arrived at the spot.

Seven fire tenders rushed to the site after the incident.

Asma, who lives in the neighbourhood, told PTI, "Around 7 am, I was in my house when I heard a loud noise and there was dust all over. When I came down, I saw that our neighbour's home has collapsed."

Meanwhilem Northeast Delhi Manoj Tiwari said that there was possbility of more people being trapped under the debris. He said that due to the extremely narrow lanes the rescue operation was facing difficulty. —*PTI*

Shux for 7-day rehab post return to earth

NEW DELHI, 12 JULY

Astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla is set to undergo a seven-day rehabilitation programme following his return from the International Space Station (ISS) on 15 July. Shukla, alongside commander Peggy Whitson and mission specialists Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski and Tibor Kapu, docked at the ISS on 26 June as part of the commercial Axiom-4 mission.

The crew will undock from the ISS on 14 July at 4.35pm IST (7.05am ET), with plans to splash down near California the following day at 3pm IST. ISRO has invested approximately Rs 550 crore in Shukla's mission, aimed at supporting its Gaganyaan human spaceflight programme targeted for 2027.

The ISS crew has been engaged in experiments, including microalgae research, crucial for food, oxygen, and biofuels in deep-space missions. Shukla has been reported to be in good health.—*PTI*

'TELL US A WEEK BEFORE BIRTH'

Pregnant woman pleads for good road in MP

SIDHI, 12 JULY

A pregnant woman from Kaddi-Bagaiha village in Madhya Pradesh's Sidhi district is advocating for a motorable access road after alleging local MP Rajesh Mishra has failed to keep a year-old promise. Leela Sahu, 25, voiced her concerns on social media, claiming that inadequate road access jeopardises her and five other expectant mothers' ability to reach medical facilities.

Sahu's campaign began last year, following her appeal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, after which Mishra assured that road construction would commence post-monsoons. However, with no progress made, Sahu now plans to travel to New Delhi after her baby is born to petition Union Minister Nitin Gadkari for immediate action.

In response, MP Mishra highlighted existing amenities such as ambulances and suggested that if informed of her due date, arrangements could be made for Sahu to be transferred to a hospital before her delivery in two weeks. —*PTI*

Rains continue to batter North India

JAIPUR, 12 JULY

Rain continues to lash parts of Rajasthan, with Jaipur receiving the highest, 87 mm, of it in the past 24 hours, the weather department said on Saturday. According to the Meteorological Centre, Jaipur, the highest precipitation was recorded in the state capital's Sambhar until 8.30am. Jaisalmer recorded the highest maximum temperature, 39.4 degrees Celsius, on Friday. Most parts of eastern Rajasthan are likely to receive more than average rainfall over the next two weeks, the weather department noted.

In related weather updates, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a 'yellow alert' for heavy rainfall in parts of Jharkhan from 13-15 July. Intermittent rainfall is expected across the state until 15 July, with particular warnings for areas like Gumla and Simdega. The state has recorded 499.6 mm of rainfall since 1 June, significantly surpassing its normal of 296.4 mm. East Singhbhum district noted the highest surplus at 157 per cent. Pakur reported rainfall deficits. —*PTI*

Commuters move through a waterlogged road after heavy rainfall, in Bikaner in Rajasthan on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

INDIA'S PRIDE

'Maratha Military Landscapes' gets UNESCO tag, 44th in India

NEW DELHI, 12 JULY

- PM Modi, Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis lauded the historic milestone and congratulated the people of India.

India's 'Maratha Military Landscapes', representing extraordinary fortification and military system envisioned by the Maratha rulers, was inscribed on the coveted UNESCO World Heritage List.

This is India's 44th property to receive the recognition.

"This global accolade celebrates India's enduring cultural legacy, showcasing its diverse traditions of architectural brilliance..," the Culture Ministry said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat along with Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis lauded the historic milestone and congratulated the people of India for this achievement.

The decision was taken during the ongoing 47th session of the World Heritage Committee being held in Paris.

"New inscription on the @UNESCO #WorldHeritage List: Maratha Military Landscapes of India, #India," UNESCO said in a post on X.

The 'Maratha Military Landscapes' comprise of Salher Fort, Shivneri Fort, Lohgad, Khanderi Fort, Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala Fort, Vijay Durg, Sindhudurg in Maharashtra and Gingee Fort in Tamil Nadu. Distributed across diverse geographical and physiographic regions, they showcase the Maratha rule's strategic military powers.

They developed between the 17th and 19th centuries.

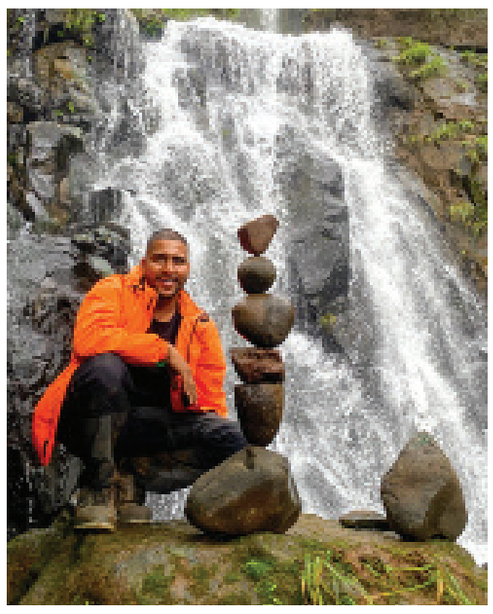
Eight of these forts are protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

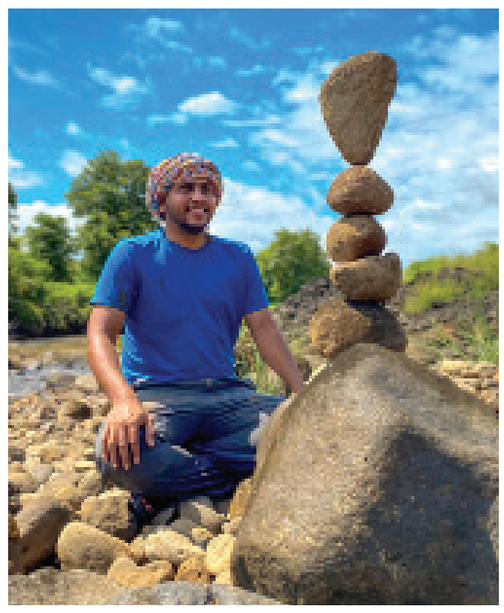
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the UNESCO, Vishal V Sharma described this victory a result of "team work" and dubbed the nomination as a "massive" one from India. India ranks sixth globally and second in the Asia Pacific Region for the most number of World Heritage Sites. 62 sites are in its tentative list. —*PTI*

The 'Maratha Military Landscapes' comprising of 12 forts across diverse geographical regions showcase the Maratha rules' strategic military powess **PHOTO: PTI**

GRAVITY IS THE NEW GLUE

In a world of digital distractions, Pune-based artist Gautam Vaishnav helps people pause through the meditative art of rock balancing. A 32-year-old BTech graduate in Computer Science, he creates gravity-defying stone sculptures at riverbanks and parks. Inspired by a friend's social media post in Mahad, his journey began with balancing a single brick. Now a teacher, he shares this deceptively simple practice, stacking rocks without glue or support and conducts workshops for students, professionals, and even the visually impaired ***PHOTOS: PTI***





Kerala uses tribal wisdom to ease human-animal conflict

For the first time in India, the Kerala has launched a programme called 'Gothrabheri', which brings together the traditional knowledge of tribal communities to help address human-animal conflict in the state ***PHOTO: PTI***

In the forests of Kerala, where elephants sometimes stray into villages and leopards are spotted near farmland, a new effort is underway to ease tensions between humans and wildlife—by listening to those who have lived closest to nature for generations.

For the first time in India, the Kerala Forest Department has launched a programme called 'Gothrabheri', which brings together the traditional knowledge of tribal communities to help address human-animal conflict in the state.

Gothrabheri, meaning gathering of tribal voices, is a symbolic initiative that unites tribal communities to share their traditional knowledge—especially about forests and wildlife, while giving them a platform to participate in conservation and conflict resolution efforts.

These communities, 37 in total, have lived in and around Kerala's forests for centuries. Many of them once shared the landscape peacefully with wild animals, following age-old customs that respected the rhythms of the natural world.

Now, as that balance has become harder to maintain, officials hope these communities might hold part of the answer.

In recent months, the Forest Department held regional gatherings with tribal representatives, encouraging them to share their experiences and ideas.

The aim is to collect this wisdom and turn it into a practical guide for forest and wildlife management, one that reflects both science and lived experience.

Kerala Forest Minister AK Saseendran, while inaugurating the final state-level convention of Gothrabheri here two days ago, said that the state government came up with the idea of Gothrabheri after realising that 13 out of the 19 people killed in wild elephant attacks this year were tribals, and that the attacks occurred inside forest areas.

"We wanted to study why such attacks are happening now, when they were rare or unheard of in the past. So we decided to listen to the tribals and gather the indigenous knowledge that once helped them live in harmony with wild animals," Saseendran said.

He added that the final statewide convention was organised to bring in experts to codify the inputs collected by the department from 18 regional conventions, and to include them in the management plan for the coming year.

"The indigenous knowledge possessed by the tribal communities that are very deeply rooted in nature, environment, and ecosystem management. So what we are planning is to gather this information from tribals themselves and use it in our day-to-day forest and wildlife management strategies," P Pugazhenthi IFS, head of Kerala Forest Force, told PTI.

He said the department listened to 37 tribal communities in Kerala during the regional convention. "Wonderful ideas regarding nature conservation, sustainable development, human-animal conflict mitigation, and co-existence have come up. Our idea is to bring them together and compile them to form a management tool," Pugazhenthi said.

He said the department is also planning to invite some start-ups to convert some of the ideas they got from the conventions into products.

"Tribal communities have been participating in all our management efforts, and this is far beyond what they will physically contribute. Here, they are going to contribute intellectually as well," Pugazhenthi said.

He said, though there could have been some on-and-off efforts to engage the tribal community in forest and wildlife management, this is the first time in the country that such a concerted effort has been taken to collect their indigenous knowledge and use it in forest and wildlife management. Raman Rajamannan, the only existing Tribal King in Kerala, from Kovilmalai in Idukki, said the entire tribal community in the state is positive about the project and welcomes it.

"This has been our long-standing demand, to be heard on this issue. We, too, have been facing the problem, especially with wild boars, and have had to give up most of our traditional crops and switch to cash crops. This has affected us both financially and socially," Rajamannan told PTI.

He said tribal communities in Kerala used to have a strong sense of responsibility towards forests and wildlife.

"That connection and commitment have drastically declined. We used to treat the forest and its animals as sacred. There was always respect," he said, adding that tribes used to refer to elephants as Patti and tigers and leopards as Thathan, affectionate terms commonly used to address elders with respect.

"There are wrongdoers in our communities as well, and perhaps because of such actions, we are now facing what feels like a curse — these increasing wild animal attacks. So it's very important to remember how we once lived peacefully, and try to return to that way of life," he added.

He said the project has already captured the indigenous knowledge of tribal communities in forest and wildlife management, and that implementing it on the ground will greatly benefit both tribal people and the wider public.

"We are wholeheartedly supporting it, because they are genuinely listening to us," he said. *—PTI*

LETTERS

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SALAR

Deep-sea mining is a bane for the planet, poor nations

While the technology to mine the ocean floor exists, no country has yet commenced full-scale commercial operations ***PHOTO: PTI***

Deep-sea mining is being promoted as a game-changing solution to secure critical minerals for the energy transition while offering economic gains to developing nations. Yet mounting evidence suggests these promises are largely unfounded—and the environmental risks far outweigh the perceived benefits.

The practice involves collecting potato-sized polymetallic nodules from the seabed, rich in minerals such as cobalt, nickel, manganese, molybdenum and rare earth elements. While the technology to mine the ocean floor exists, no country has yet commenced full-scale commercial operations. That may soon change, as nations meet this month in Kingston, Jamaica, to finalise a mining code that could pave the way for extraction in international waters.

Australia's national science agency, the CSIRO, has now stepped into the debate. On Thursday, it released new research on the environmental impacts of deep-sea mining, developed with input from Griffith University, Museums Victoria, the University of the Sunshine Coast, and Earth Sciences New Zealand. The aim is to provide science-based tools to evaluate environmental risks and enable responsible monitoring should mining proceed.

The research was commissioned by Metals Company Australia, a subsidiary of Canadian firm The Metals Company, which conducted test mining in the Pacific in 2022. The company is one of the loudest voices calling for deep-sea mining to begin, actively lobbying for a global mining code and pursuing commercial operations with US government approval.

Speaking to the media, CSIRO's Senior Principal Research Scientist Dr Piers Dunstan confirmed the activity had "substantially affected the sea floor," particularly harming marine species that live attached to the nodules, many of which may never recover. He stressed that if mining goes ahead, environmental monitoring will be essential.

But many scientists, including experts in international politics and environmental management, remain unconvinced. They argue that deep-sea mining poses major ecological risks, while its economic rationale is flawed. Three key points underpin their argument for a global ban.

Minerals are not scarce

Proponents argue that deep-sea mining is essential to meet the growing demand for clean energy infrastructure. However, global terrestrial reserves of cobalt, copper, manganese, molybdenum and nickel are more than sufficient to meet demand for decades, even considering the rapid pace of the green transition.

The real motivation, critics argue, is financial speculation. Investors and companies stand to profit from government subsidies and resource speculation, not actual scarcity. Deep-sea mining, due to its technological complexity and remote conditions, is an expensive and speculative industry with no guaranteed payoff.

It won't replace mining on land

Another key claim is that deep-sea mining could reduce the need for environmentally and socially damaging mining operations on land. But this argument falls flat under scrutiny.

Land-based mining companies operate under long-term contracts and are unlikely to abandon existing or planned projects. Deep-sea mining will not displace these ventures; rather, it will add to the global extractive footprint.

Moreover, many of the social problems tied to land-based mining—such as labour rights abuses, corruption, and environmental degradation—are mirrored in ocean industries. Shipping, offshore drilling and other marine industries are already rife with modern slavery and labour exploitation due to poor regulation and weak enforcement.

Exploiting the 'Common Heritage of Humankind'

The international seabed is governed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the "common heritage of humankind." This means its resources should be shared fairly among all nations, particularly developing ones.

However, in practice, benefits have not flowed to the Global South. Past partnerships have disproportionately benefitted companies from the Global North, leaving developing countries with little more than environmental risk and economic losses.

In one high-profile case, Canadian firm Nautilus went bankrupt in 2019, leaving Papua New Guinea saddled with millions in debt after a failed seabed mining venture. The Metals Company's current partnerships with Nauru and Tonga have also raised concerns, especially after its recent agreement with the US, which may undermine previous commitments.

In Jamaica, European investors took control of Blue Minerals Jamaica, originally a Jamaican-owned company, shortly after its formation. The deal exemplifies how profits can be extracted from developing nations while ownership and control remain in the hands of foreign investors.

A failing industry?

The economic viability of deep-sea mining is increasingly in question. Several large investors have exited the sector, and The Metals Company itself received a delisting notice from the Nasdaq stock exchange due to poor financial performance.

With high financial risks, unproven returns and mounting environmental concerns, deep-sea mining appears to be a high-stakes gamble. Even the most advanced monitoring frameworks may not be enough to prevent irreversible damage to fragile ecosystems we barely understand. For now, many scientists and civil society groups are calling for a moratorium—or an outright ban—on international seabed mining. The deep ocean, they argue, should remain protected, not exploited. In the words of critics: just because we can mine the deep sea, doesn't mean we should. *—PTI*

MIT researchers say ChatGPT can rot your brain, dumb you down

Since ChatGPT appeared almost three years ago, the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies on learning has been widely debated. Are they handy tools for personalised education, or gateways to academic dishonesty?

Most importantly, there has been concern that using AI will lead to a widespread "dumbing down", or decline in the ability to think critically. If students use AI tools too early, the argument goes, they may not develop basic skills for critical thinking and problem-solving.

Is that really the case? According to a recent study by scientists from MIT, it appears so. Using ChatGPT to help write essays, the researchers say, can lead to "cognitive debt" and a "likely decrease in learning skills".

So what did the study find?

Over the course of four months, the MIT team asked 54 adults to write a series of three essays using either AI (ChatGPT), a search engine, or their own brains ("brain-only" group). The team measured cognitive engagement by examining electrical activity in the brain and through linguistic analysis of the essays.

The cognitive engagement of those who used AI was significantly lower than the other two groups. This group also had a harder time recalling quotes from their essays and felt a lower sense of ownership over them.

Interestingly, participants switched roles for a final, fourth essay (the brain-only group used AI and vice versa). The AI-to-brain group performed worse and had engagement that was only slightly better than the other group's during their first session, far below the engagement of the brain-only group in their third session.

The authors claim this demonstrates how prolonged use of AI led to participants accumulating "cognitive debt". When they finally had the opportunity to use their brains, they were unable to replicate the engagement or perform as well as the other two groups.

Cautiously, the authors note that only 18 participants (six per condition) completed the fourth, final session. Therefore, the findings are preliminary and require further testing.

Does this really show AI makes us stupider?

These results do not necessarily mean that students who used AI accumulated "cognitive debt". In our view, the findings are due to the particular design of the study.

Using ChatGPT to help write essays, the researchers say, can lead to cognitive debt and a likely decrease in learning skills ***PHOTO: PIXABAY***

The change in neural connectivity of the brain-only group over the first three sessions was likely the result of becoming more familiar with the study task, a phenomenon known as the familiarisation effect. As study participants repeat the task, they become more familiar and efficient, and their cognitive strategy adapts accordingly.

When the AI group finally got to "use their brains", they were only doing the task once. As a result, they were unable to match the other group's experience. They achieved only slightly better engagement than the brain-only group during the first session.

To fully justify the researchers' claims, the AI-to-brain participants would also need to complete three writing sessions without AI.

Similarly, the fact the brain-to-AI group used ChatGPT more productively and strategically is likely due to the nature of the fourth writing task, which required writing an essay on one of the previous three topics.

As writing without AI required more substantial engagement, they had a far better recall of what they had written in the past. Hence, they primarily used AI to search for new information and refine what they had previously written.

What are the implications of AI in assessment?

To understand the current situation with AI, we can look back to what happened when calculators first became available.

Back in the 1970s, their impact was regulated by making exams much harder. Instead of doing calculations by hand, students were expected to use calculators and spend their cognitive efforts on more complex tasks.

Effectively, the bar was significantly raised, which made students work equally hard (if not harder) than before calculators were available.

The challenge with AI is that, for the most part, educators have not raised the bar in a way that makes AI a necessary part of the process. Educators still require students to complete the same tasks and expect the same standard of work as they did five years ago.

In such situations, AI can indeed be detrimental. Students can for the most part offload critical engagement with learning to AI, which results in "metacognitive laziness".

However, just like calculators, AI can and should help us accomplish tasks that were previously impossible – and still require significant engagement. For example, we might ask teaching students to use AI to produce a detailed lesson plan, which will then be evaluated for quality and pedagogical soundness in an oral examination.

In the MIT study, participants who used AI were producing the "same old" essays. They adjusted their engagement to deliver the standard of work expected of them.

The same would happen if students were asked to perform complex calculations with or without a calculator. The group doing calculations by hand would sweat, while those with calculators would barely blink an eye. *—PTI*

US court halts arrests of immigrants in LA

LOS ANGELES, 12 JULY

A federal judge has ordered the Trump administration to cease indiscriminate immigration stops and arrests across seven counties in California, including Los Angeles. Immigrant advocacy groups filed the lawsuit, alleging systemic targeting of ethnic minorities amid heightened immigration enforcement. Plaintiffs included detained immigrants and US citizens, one of whom had shown identification yet was still apprehended. Judge Maame E Frimpong's ruling also prevents the government from limiting attorney access at a detention facility in Los Angeles. During a recent surge of arrests—including at car washes and cannabis farms—advocates claim officials are relying on racial profiling. The ACLU has said that many detentions were based solely on racial appearance. *—PTI*

PHOTO: REWARDS FOR JUSTICE WEBSITE OF US GOVERNMENT

TTP commander killed in bombing incident in Pak

PESHAWAR, 12 JULY

A commander of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was killed in an explosion while attempting to launch a quadcopter loaded with explosives in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Tirah Valley. Sources revealed that Yasin, alias Abdullah, died when a bomb he was handling detonated, injuring two of his associates. Yasin had joined the TTP on 24 May and was leading operations in a region notorious for ongoing conflicts. Recent counter-terrorism missions in the area have intensified, resulting in the neutralisation of 22 militants in the past month alone. The Tirah Valley remains a hotspot for IED attacks targeting civilians, prompting continued intelligence-based operations by Pakistani forces to dismantle militant hideouts and weapon caches. *-PTI*

Pakistan and Russia sign deal to revive steel mills

ISLAMABAD, 12 JULY

Pakistan and Russia have formalised an agreement to restore and modernise the Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM), a significant move in their bilateral relations, media reports indicate. The revitalisation project, originally established with Soviet aid in 1971, aims to restart and enhance steel production in Karachi. The agreement was signed at the Pakistan Embassy in Moscow during a visit by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Haroon Akhtar Khan, who emphasised the importance of shared history and industrial collaboration. Previously, China had sought to secure the contract, but negotiations faltered. The PSM has faced severe operational challenges since its decline began in 2008, with losses soaring to PKR 200 billion by 2018. *—PTI*

TRUMP HITS MEXICO AND EU WITH 30% TARIFFS

Says Mexico isn't doing enough, EU relation not reciprocal

LOS ANGELES, 12 JULY

US President Donald Trump on Saturday announced on his social media account that he's levying tariffs of 30 per cent against the European Union and Mexico starting 1 August.

In his letter to Mexico's leader, Trump acknowledged that the country has been helpful in stemming the flow of undocumented migrants and fentanyl into the United States. But he said the country has not done enough to stop North America from turning into a "Narco-Trafficking Playground."

"Mexico has been helping me secure the border, BUT, what Mexico has done, is not enough," Trump added.

Trump in his letter to the European Union said that the US trade deficit was a national security threat.

"We have had years to discuss our Trading Relationship with The European Union, and we have concluded we must move away from these long-term, large, and persistent, Trade Deficits, engendered by your Tariff, and Non-Tariff, Policies, and Trade Barriers," Trump wrote in the letter to the EU. "Our relationship has been, unfortunately, far from Reciprocal."

US President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio
PHOTO: PTI

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen responded by noting the bloc's "commitment to dialogue, stability, and a constructive transatlantic partnership."

"At the same time, we will take all necessary steps to safeguard EU interests, including the adoption of proportionate countermeasures if required," von der Leyen said.

The bloc collectively sells more to the US than any other country. US goods imports from the EU topped USD 553 billion in 2022, according to the Office of the US Trade Representative.

Mexico and the EU are two of the US' biggest trading partners. The announcement comes after Trump issued a 35 per cent tariff against Cannada, another one of US' largest partners. *—PTI*

200 immigrants held on California ganja farms; 1 dies

Federal immigration authorities said Friday they arrested about 200 immigrants suspected of being in the country illegally in raids a day earlier on two California cannabis farm sites. One farm worker died on Friday from injuries sustained a day earlier, as protesters engaged in a tense standoff with authorities.

US State Department lays off 1,300 people

The US State Department fired more than 1,300 employees on Friday in line with a dramatic reorganisation plan from the Trump administration. The department sent layoff notices to 1,107 civil servants and 246 foreign service officers with assignments in the US. Notices said positions were being "abolished".

US sanctions Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel

The US announced Friday it was sanctioning Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel and other top officials for human rights violations and restricting access to visas on the anniversary of the biggest protests. The US also sanctioned Cuban Defense Minister Alvaro Lopez Miera and Interior Minister Lazaro Alvarez Casas.

'US visa holders will be deported if they violate laws'

US visa holders will be deported if found violating US laws, the US Embassy said. "US visa screening does not stop after a visa is issued," US Embassy in India said on X. "We continuously check visa holders to ensure they follow all US laws and immigration rules — and we will revoke their visas and deport them if they don't."

Palestinians inspect the wreckage of a gas station destroyed in an Israeli airstrike in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza Strip, on Saturday PHOTO: PTI

Israel kills 52 in Gaza airstrikes & shootings near aid sites

DEIR AL-BALAH, 12 JULY

- At least 24 people were killed on their way to a food distribution site near Rafah run by an Israeli-backed American organisation, while four children and two women were killed in airstrikes

Israeli airstrikes killed at least 28 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip including four children, while 24 others were fatally shot on their way to aid distribution sites, Palestinian hospital officials and witnesses said on Saturday.

The children and two women were among at least 13 people who were killed in Deir al-Balah, in central Gaza, after Israeli airstrikes pounded the area starting late Friday, officials in Al-Aqsa Martyr's Hospital said. Fifteen others died in Israeli airstrikes in Khan Younis, in southern Gaza, according to Nasser Hospital.

At least 24 people were killed on their way to a food distribution site near Rafah run by an Israeli-backed American organisation, said hospital officials and witnesses, including those wounded.

The Israeli military said it fired warning shots to disperse a group of people it believed were "posing a threat to the troops." The military said it was not aware of any casualties.

Witnesses said that they were shot at 200m away from the aid site.

The Israeli military said that over the past 48 hours, troops struck approximately 250 targets in the Gaza Strip, including militants, booby-trapped structures, weapons storage facilities, anti-tank missile launch posts, sniper posts, tunnels and additional Hamas sites. *—PTI/ANI*

KATHMANDU, 12 JULY

Floods in Nepal killed at least nine people and left 19 missing, as it destroyed the 'Friendship Bridge' that links the country with China. But there was no weather forecast predicting rains, and indeed, little rain, raising questions as to why the it occurred.

The floods seem to have been triggered by a drainage of a supraglacial lake, which started forming as a pond in December 2024, according to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), .

Supraglacial lakes form on the surface of glaciers, particularly in debris-covered areas. They often begin as small meltwater ponds that gradually expand and sometimes merge to form larger lakes, ICIMOD said.

Rising temperatures, however, make them highly unstable.

In the two months between May and June alone, three glacial origin floods struck the region; in Nepal, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

ICIMOD said the most recent flood originated from the lake north of Nepal's Langtang Himal range.

—Salar News with Agencies

Chinese land (left) and Nepalese land (right) were left disjointed after the Friendship Bridge, a key link over the Ghotekoshi River which connects the two nations, was swept away PHOTO: PTI

Russian drone and missile attacks kill 2 in Ukraine

KYIV, 12 JULY

At least two people were killed overnight into Saturday as Russia continued to pound Ukraine with hundreds of drones as part of a stepped-up bombing.

Two people died and 14 were wounded when Russian forces attacked the Bukovina area in the Chernivtsi region of southwestern Ukraine with four drones and a missile, regional Governor Ruslan Zaparaniuk said on Saturday. He said that the two people died due to falling debris from a drone.

A drone attack in Ukraine's western Lviv region wounded six people, regional Governor Maksym Kozytskyi said.

Three people were wounded in Kharkiv in northeastern Ukraine when the city was hit by eight drones and two missiles, Mayor Ihor Terekhov said.

Three people were wounded in Kharkiv in northeastern Ukraine when the city was hit by eight drones and two missiles PHOTO: PTI

RUSSIA WARNS US, JAPAN, S KOREA AGAINST COALTION

Russia's Foreign Minister warned the US, South Korea and Japan against forming a security partnership targeting North Korea or Moscow as he visited his country's ally for talks on further solidifying their booming military and other cooperation.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov flew to North Korea's eastern Wonsan city on Friday for a meeting with his North Korean counterpart, Choe Son Hui. *—PTI*

Boeing settles with Ethiopian 737 crash victim

CHICAGO, 12 JULY

Boeing has reached a settlement with Paul Njoroge, a Canadian man whose wife and three children tragically perished in the 2019 Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 crash. The settlement was finalised just days before a jury trial was set to begin in Chicago's federal court to determine damages for Njoroge, whose family was en route to Kenya when the aircraft malfunctioned and crashed, killing all 157 on board.

Njoroge has struggled with overwhelming grief and emotional distress since the incident, stating that he has been unable to return to his home in Toronto due to painful memories. His attorney, Robert Clifford, described his client as suffering from "complicated grief" and haunted by nightmares. While the financial terms of the settlement were not disclosed, Clifford indicated Njoroge intended to seek "millions" in damages.

The crashes of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 and an earlier incident in Indonesia resulted from a faulty system on the Boeing 737 Max, which led to a worldwide grounding of the aircraft.

Boeing has reached settlements with several victim families. *—PTI*

Army Chief never sought to become Prez, says Pak PM

ISLAMABAD, 12 JULY

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has refuted swirling rumours that President Asif Ali Zardari may be compelled to resign, and that Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir harbours ambitions to assume the Presidency.

Sharif characterised these claims as "mere speculations." He emphasised the mutual respect and shared vision for Pakistan's prosperity between himself, Zardari, and Munir. The clarification follows Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's remarks on social media, denouncing a "malicious campaign" against the trio.

Naqvi, deemed close to the military leadership, further stated, "There has been no discussion about the president resigning or the COAS aspiring for the Presidency," attributing the disinformation to hostile foreign elements. Munir, appointed army chief in 2022 for a three-year term, saw his tenure extended to five years last year, with potential for further extension.

Zardari's election as President last year was seen as a quid pro quo for supporting Sharif's premiership, and both Zardari and his son, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, continue to maintain strong ties with the establishment *—PTI*

UK sentences gang which targeted Indian jewellers

LONDON, 12 JULY

Four members of an organised crime syndicate have been sentenced to a total of 17 years and one month for stealing over £1 million worth of jewellery from London's Indian and South Asian community. The Metropolitan Police announced that Jerry O'Donnell, 33, Barney Maloney, Quey Adger, 23, and Patrick Ward, 43, were imprisoned at Snaresbrook Crown Court after pleading guilty to multiple burglaries. Detective Sergeant Lee Davison, who led the investigation, stated, "This comprehensive operation disrupted a key part of an organised crime network." The arrests came during a year-long operation that culminated in the trio's July 2024 arrest. *-PTI*

TRUMP DEFENDS TEXAN AUTHORITIES

US DROWNS IN FLOODS AND BURNS IN WILDFIRES

SUTTON/ KERRVILLE/ JACOB LAKE, 12 JULY

Floods and wildfires continued to pound the US, as President Donald Trump began visiting Texas, where floods recently killed around 100 people.

TRUMP IN TEXAS

Trump toured the devastation from catastrophic flooding in Texas and lauded state and local officials, even amid mounting criticism that they may have failed to warn residents quickly enough that a deadly wall of water was coming their way.

Trump has repeatedly promised to do away with the Federal Emergency Management Agency as part of his larger pledges to dramatically shrink the size of government, and he's fond of decrying officials in Democrat-run states hit by past natural disasters and tragedy.

But he struck a far more somber and sympathetic tone while visiting America's most populous Republican state.

"The search for the missing continues. The people that are doing it are unbelievable," Trump said.

Aerial resources working to suppress a wildfire burning north of Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona, on Thursday PHOTO: PTI

VERMONT

Communities in rural parts of Vermont on Friday woke up once again to damaged homes and washed-out roads due to heavy rainfall and flash flooding, making it the third consecutive summer that severe floods have inundated parts of the state.

Up to 5 inches of rain fell in just a few hours on Thursday, prompting rapid flooding as local waterways began to swell, said National Weather Service's Burlington office.

Nearly 20 homes were cut off in the small town of Sutton as a local brook quickly rose from its banks and surrounded buildings, Fire Chief Kyle Seymour said.

MASSACHUSETTS

Flash flooding occurred on Thursday after rains dumped more than 7 inches of water in some areas.

Some businesses were flooded in the town of Weymouth, which saw the bulk of the rain and flooding while commuters faced delays as highways and streets south of Boston flooded.

WILDFIRES AT THE GRAND CANYON

Visitors and staff at two Grand Canyon parks were evacuated because of wildfires.

Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park closed Thursday morning after lighting sparked blazes on both rims, the park said. The wildfire on the South Rim has burned 6.5 square km, with no containment of the perimeter.

The Grand Canyon's North Rim in Arizona also closed Thursday because of a wildfire on adjacent Bureau of Land Management land near Jacob Lake.

The fire began Wednesday evening after a thunderstorm moved through the area, fire officials said. It has burned about 3.9 square km with zero containment. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FB

Nadda invites Saudi firms to invest in India

NEW DELHI, 12 JULY

Union Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister JP Nadda has called on Saudi Arabian companies to seek investment opportunities in India during his official visit to the kingdom. Accompanied by senior officials and representatives from various fertiliser firms, Nadda engaged with Abdulaziz Al Qahtani, Chairman of the Saudi India Business Council, and held discussions with the local business community in Dammam, Eastern Province. The minister highlighted the strengthening ties between Indian and Saudi companies, encouraging them to explore potential investments in India, according to an official statement. *—PTI*

Anthem Biosciences secures Rs 1,016 cr funds

NEW DELHI, 12 JULY

Anthem Biosciences has raised Rs 1,016 crore from anchor investors ahead of its initial public offering (IPO), which opens for subscription from 14 to 16 July. The Bengaluru-based contract research, development, and manufacturing organisation (CRDMO) allocated 1.78 crore shares at Rs 570 each — the upper end of the price band to 60 institutional investors, according to a BSE circular. Participants include the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, Government Pension Fund Global, Amundi, PineBridge, and Indian mutual funds such as HDFC, ICICI Prudential, Axis, and UTI. The Rs 3,395 crore IPO is entirely an offer-for-sale, meaning proceeds will go to existing shareholders. Anthem specialises in drug discovery and manufacturing complex fermentation-based active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs). Listed peers include Syngene International, Sai Life Sciences, Suven Life Sciences, and Divi's Laboratories. *—PTI*

IIFL Home Finance secures $100M from AIIB

NEW DELHI, 12 JULY

IIFL Home Finance, a company dedicated to the affordable housing sector, has announced a significant funding agreement, securing USD 100 million (approximately Rs 858 crore) from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). This partnership aims to improve access to affordable housing finance for economically weaker sections and lower-income groups (EWS/LIG), while also advancing green building standards within the housing sector. IIFL Home Finance plans to provide home loans primarily targeting EWS and LIG families for home purchase or construction in urban and semi-urban areas. *—PTI*

FundsIndia Group names Akshay Sapru as CEO

CHENNAI, 12 JULY

Digital platform for mutual funds and investment solutions provider FundsIndia has appointed Akshay Sapru as its Group Chief Executive Officer, the company said on Saturday. FundsIndia is backed by private equity firm WestBridge Capital, a majority stakeholder in the city-based firm. On his new role, Akshay Sapru would report to the Board of Directors and lead the company's strategic direction and growth across all verticals, FundsIndia said in a company statement. With a career spanning over 27 years in the banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) sectors, Akshay Sapru brings a wealth of domain knowledge and multifaceted leadership skills to FundsIndia. His expertise covers a broad spectrum, including retail banking, private wealth management, sales and digital innovation, it said. *—PTI*

FPIs infuse Rs 5,260 cr in Indian equities: NSDL

Total net investment for the month of July is Rs 3,839 cr

NEW DELHI, 12 JULY

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) remained net buyers in the Indian equity markets this week, making a total net investment of Rs 5,260 crore during the period from 7 July to 11 July, according to data released by the National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL).

The data highlighted that FPIs were net buyers on all trading days of the week, signalling positive investor sentiment towards Indian markets. The highest net investment was recorded on Tuesday, with FPIs investing Rs 2,771 crore in equities on that single day.

With this week's inflows, the total net investment by foreign investors in the equity segment for the month of July has reached Rs 3,839 crore. This marks a recovery from the previous week.

Siddhartha Khemka, Head of Research at Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services, told ANI that FII activity is expected to remain subdued in the upcoming week as the market may see increased volatility due to ongoing uncertainty around US trade negotiations.

Khemka added that investors will be closely watching key domestic macroeconomic indicators, including Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation data.

Additionally, market participants will monitor the first quarter earnings and any updates related to the India-US trade deal.

Despite global uncertainties, India continues to attract foreign investments owing to a combination of supportive domestic policies and strong macroeconomic fundamentals.

In the previous month of June, FPIs had made a net investment of Rs 14,590 crore in the Indian equity segment. In May, foreign investors poured in Rs 19,860 crore, making it the best-performing month of the year so far in terms of FPI inflows.

However, earlier this year, FPIs had pulled out significant amounts from Indian equities. They sold stocks worth Rs 3,973 crore in March, while in January and February, they offloaded equities worth Rs 78,027 crore and Rs 34,574 crore, respectively. *—ANI*

PHOTO: ANI

- With this week's inflows, the total net investment by foreign investors in the equity segment for the month of July has reached Rs 3,839 crore.

PHOTO: X/TESLA

Tesla gets nod to open 1st showroom in Maharashtra

MUMBAI, 12 JULY

Days ahead of its debut in the country, EV giant Tesla on Friday received a go-ahead from the Regional Transport Office (RTO) here to display vehicles, allow test drives and sell its cars.

The Andheri RTO formally issued a 'trade certificate' to the global EV giant, officials said. Ending months of speculation over its entry into the Indian market, Tesla is set to inaugurate its showroom in Mumbai's Bandra Kurla Complex on 15 July.

Before issuing the certificate, Motor Vehicle Inspectors inspected the showroom, parking and godown facilities mentioned in the company's application, RTO official said.

Another RTO official said the application for dealership registration was received earlier this week. The trade certificate is issued under section 35 of the Central Motor Vehicle Rules, and it authorises unregistered vehicles to be legally operated on public roads under specific conditions.

The certificate is valid for five years, and allows car display & exhibition, delivery runs & workshop usage.— *PTI*

BENGALURU, 12 JULY

Apple's key supplier Foxconn has started importing components from China to India for the upcoming iPhone 17, according to The Economic Times, which cited customs data.

The imports include display assemblies, cover glass, mechanical housings, and integrated rear camera modules. While volumes remain low, the imports are believed to be for trial production, signalling the start of initial assembly processes.

Approximately 10 per cent of Foxconn's imports from China to India in June were parts for the iPhone 17, while the bulk was for iPhone 16 and iPhone 14 models, aimed at meeting expected demand during India's festive season.

Trial production of the iPhone 17 is set to begin this month, with full-scale manufacturing expected in August ahead of a September launch. For the first time, Apple will manufacture the new iPhone simultaneously in both India and China. India is fast becoming a strategic manufacturing and export hub for Apple, particularly for devices bound for the US market.

Following high tariffs on Chinese goods introduced under the Trump administration, Apple plans to shift all iPhone production for the US to India by 2026.

With the iPhone 16, India participated in Apple's product development process—a role it will continue with the iPhone 17. *—Agencies*

India's forex reserves fall by $3.05B

MUMBAI, 12 JULY

India's foreign exchange reserves (forex) witnessed a slip of USD 3.049 billion to USD 699.736 billion for the week ending 4 July amid the uncertain global trade environment, official data released by the Reserve Bank of India showed.

In the preceding week, the country's forex reserves registered an uptick of USD 4.8 billion to USD 702.78 billion.

In the week ending 4 July, according to the RBI data, the major component of the forex reserves, the foreign currency assets, slipped USD 3.537 billion to USD 591.287 billion.

Contrary to the dip in the previous week, the Gold reserves witnessed an uptick of USD 342 million to USD 84.846 billion in the week ending 4 July, data suggests.

A significant constituent of the forex, the Special Drawing Rights witnessed an uptick of USD 39 million, while the Reserve position in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was up by USD 107 million to USD 4.735 billion, data of the central bank suggests.

Central banks worldwide are increasingly accumulating safe-haven gold in their foreign exchange reserves kitty, and India is no exception. The share of gold maintained by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its foreign exchange reserves has almost doubled since 2021, till recently.

In 2023, India added around USD 58 billion to its foreign exchange reserves, contrasting with a cumulative decline of USD 71 billion in 2022. In 2024, the reserves rose by a little over USD 20 billion, touching an all-time high of USD 704.885 billion at the end of September 2024. *—ANI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Aviation industry to report net loss of Rs 30B: ICRA

NEW DELHI, 12 JULY

India's aviation industry is projected to record a net loss in the range of Rs 20-30 billion in the financial year 2025-26 (FY26), broadly in line with the estimated losses for the previous financial year, according to the credit rating firm ICRA.

The firm said in a report that these losses are expected to continue compared to a net profit of around Rs 16 billion in FY2024 due to the anticipated pressure on yields as airlines strive to maintain adequate Passenger Load Factors (PLF) amid continued Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) prices.

The report stated that while demand for air travel remains robust, airlines are unlikely to raise ticket prices significantly due to competitive pressures and price sensitivity in the domestic market. This, coupled with costlier fuel, is expected to eat into profitability.

Adding to the financial strain, interest costs are likely to rise in FY26 due to growing lease liabilities, as several airlines have scheduled aircraft deliveries. The increased debt burden is expected to raise financing costs, further compressing margins. *—ANI*

INDIA PHARMA, HEALTHCARE REVENUE TO GROW STEADILY IN Q1: REPORT

NEW DELHI, 12 JULY

Indian pharma and healthcare sector will witness steady revenue growth in the first quarter of the Financial Year 2026 (Q1FY26E), but concerns loom as EBITDA margins are expected to decline amid rising input costs and pricing pressures, according to a report by HDFC Securities.

The report added that the pharma sector firms studied by it may witness a 11 per cent year-on-year (YoY) sales growth, driven by an 11 per cent YoY increase in the India business along with 2 per cent QoQ growth in US sales.

The Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation, and Amortization (EBITDA) is a financial metric used to assess a company's profitability and operational efficiency.

The report stated that EBITDA margins for the pharma segment are expected to decrease by 42bps YoY, driven by price erosion in US and an expected increase in research and development (R&D).

The hospital business is projected to grow by 15 per cent YoY, as muted occupancy will be partly supported by steady ARPOB, or Average Revenue Per Occupied Bed, which is a key performance indicator used in healthcare industry to assess financial performance.

India's pharmaceutical market for FY 2023-24 is valued at USD 50 billion, with domestic consumption valued at USD 23.5 billion and exports valued at USD 26.5 billion. *—ANI*

18% Y-O-Y GROWTH

Consumer discretionary sector shows mixed signals: HDFC

NEW DELHI, 12 JULY

The consumer discretionary sector is anticipated to experience mixed signals, projecting an 18 per cent year-on-year growth, according to a report by HDFC Securities. This sector encompasses goods and services deemed non-essential but desirable when consumers possess the disposable income to indulge.

The report highlights that while new age businesses are expected to drive growth at an impressive 49 per cent YoY, traditional paint companies may hinder overall performance due to slower growth rates. Specific segments are projected to show varied growth: jewellery is set to expand by approximately 20 per cent, followed by food and grocery (16 per cent), apparel (16 per cent), and footwear (7 per cent).

Same-store sales growth (SSSG) is predicted to widely diverge across categories in Q1. The jewellery sector is likely to maintain robust growth, whereas the offline food and grocery and apparel sectors should see stable growth. Conversely, footwear, paint companies, and new age businesses may face demand pressures.

Margins for the discretionary sector are expected to contract by around 80 basis points to 9.6 per cent, primarily due to weak SSSG and elevated quick commerce costs. Additionally, the sector has faced earnings downgrades, yet valuations for discretionary brands remain high. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

- Specific segments are projected to show varied growth: jewellery is set to expand by approximately 20 per cent, followed by food and grocery (16 per cent), apparel (16 per cent), and footwear (7 per cent).

FROM RS 900 TO RS 470

Musk's X reduces subscription fees in India by up to 48%

NEW DELHI, 12 JULY

Social media platform X has slashed subscription fees for account holders in India by up to 48 per cent, according to updates on its portal.

The social media firm has slashed premium account subscription fee for mobile app by about 48 per cent to Rs 470 from Rs 900 it charged earlier on a monthly basis.

The subscribers of premium and premium-plus service at X get a checkmark next to their name or id.

Similarly, X has reduced premium subscription fee by about 34 per cent for web accounts to Rs 427 from Rs 650 charged earlier.

The charges for premium subscription on mobile apps are higher at Rs 470 due to additional fees charged by app stores.

- The basic account holder gets featured to enable them to edit posts, write longer posts, background video playback and they can download videos.

The company has slashed monthly subscription for basic subscribers on their handle by 30 per cent to Rs 170 from Rs 243.75 earlier.

The basic account holder gets featured to enable them to edit posts, write longer posts, background video playback and they can download videos.

The reduction is about 34 per cent for the annual subscription fee of basic account, which will be billed Rs 1,700 on an annual basis, down from Rs 2,590.48 charged earlier.

The premium plus subscription of X account now cost users about 26 per cent less at Rs 2,570 on web compared to Rs 3,470 charged earlier.

The premium plus accounts on X are completely ad free, holders can write articles, get access to SuperGrok with Grok 4. *—PTI*

- The social media firm has slashed premium account subscription fee for mobile app by about 48 per cent to Rs 470 from Rs 900 it charged earlier on a monthly basis. The subscribers of premium and premium-plus service at X get a checkmark next to their name or id.

Musk's xAI eyes $200B in new fundraising round

BENGALURU, 12 JULY

Elon Musk's artificial intelligence company, xAI, is reportedly planning to raise funds that could boost its valuation to between USD 170 billion and USD 200 billion, a tenfold increase from its valuation early last year.

Ongoing discussions with investors may commence formally as soon as next month, marking the third significant fundraising initiative in less than eight weeks.

In July, xAI secured USD 10 billion through loans and cash investments, following a USD 300 million secondary stock offering in June. This recent fundraising push follows a sharp escalation from USD 18 billion valuation during its "series B" round in May 2024.

The company this week unveiled fourth iteration of its Grok chatbot, which operates on Musk's social media platform, X. This release closely follows incidents where the chatbot disseminated antisemitic content, prompting the company to affirm its commitment to banning hate speech.

Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) is expected to play a pivotal role in this forthcoming funding round, having previously invested USD 800 million in xAI. *—Agencies*

Iga Swiatek dominates Amanda to win Wimbledon 2025

Iga Swiatek after winning the Wimbledon 2025 PHOTO: PTI

KARACHI, 12 JULY

Iga Swiatek won her first Wimbledon championship with a 6-0, 6-0 victory over Amanda Anisimova on Saturday in the first women's final at the tournament in 114 years in which one player failed to claim a single game.

Swiatek's victory on a sunny, breezy afternoon at Centre Court took just 57 minutes and gave Swiatek her sixth Grand Slam title overall. She is now 6-0 in major title matches.

The 24-year-old from Poland finished with a 55-24 edge in total points and accumulated that despite needing to produce merely 10 winners.

Anisimova was shaky from the start and made 28 unforced errors.

Swiatek already owned four trophies from the French Open's red clay and one from the U.S. Open's hard courts, but this is her first title of her professional career at any grass-court tournament. And it ended a long-for-her drought: Swiatek last won a trophy anywhere more than a year ago, at Roland-Garros in June 2024.

Kate, the Princess of Wales, was sitting in the Royal Box on Saturday and took part in the on-court ceremony afterward. Swiatek is the eighth consecutive first-time women's champion at Wimbledon, but her triumph stands out from the others because it came in a stunningly dominant performance against Anisimova, a 23-year-old American who was participating in her first final at a major.

Anisimova eliminated No. 1-ranked Aryna Sabalenka in the semifinals, but never looked like she was the same player on Saturday. Not at all. When it was over, while Swiatek climbed into the stands to celebrate with her team, Anisimova sat on the sidelines in tears.

Back in 1911, Dorothea Lambert Chambers was a 6-0, 6-0 winner against Dora Boothby.

Anisimova will break into the top 10 in the rankings for the first time next week.—*PTI*

Rahul slams his 2nd Test ton at Lord's

Vengsarkar has 3 hundreds at Lord's in 1979, 1982, and 1986

LONDON, 12 JULY

Stylish opener KL Rahul on Saturday became only the second Indian batter to score more than one century at the hallowed Lord's, after yesteryear middle-order mainstay Dilip Vengsarkar.

Rahul reached the landmark with a single off Jofra Archer to covers right after the lunch break on the third day of the third Test against England. However, Rahul was dismissed by off-spinner Shoaib Bashir immediately after getting to the three-figure mark, which was 10th overall in the game's traditional format and ninth away from home.In all, the Karnataka man scored exactly 100 in 177 balls with the help of 13 boundaries.

This was his second hundred of the ongoing five-match rubber after his century in the series opener at Leeds.During his stay in the middle, Rahul played some lovely drives and flicks, but the standout shot was his backfoot punch square of the wicket off Brydon Carse. Vengsarkar has three hundreds at Lord's in 1979, 1982, and 1986.Overall, 10 Indians, including Rahul and Vengsarkar, have managed to make the honours board at Lord's.

India's KL Rahul celebrates his century on the third day PHOTO: PTI

Vengsarkar is a visiting batter with the most hundreds at the iconic venue, which is also known as the Mecca of Cricket. Rahul's first hundred at the venue had come in 2021, when he scored 129 in India's 151-run win.The series is locked at 1-1.

After Ayush Mhatre Slams Century, Two Stars Hit 50s

Abhigyan Kundu and Rahul Kumar have slammed fifties for four down India. Earlier, India U19 captain Ayush Mhatre led from the front as the Chennai Super Kings batter slammed a fine century against England U19 in the first Youth Test on Saturday. Vaibhav Suryavanshi started strong with a flurry of boundaries but fell on the low score of 14. After clinching the five-match ODI series, the India U19 team will aim to do well against England in the first Youth Test. The series will feature two Tests as both teams will be putting their best foot forward. —*PTI*

ARCHERY WORLD CUP STAGE 4

Jyothi Surekha Vennam

Jyoti-led India win 2 silver, a bronze

MADRID, 12 JULY

Jyothi Surekha Vennam clinched two silver medals and a bronze to cap a hat-trick of podium finishes at the Archery World Cup Stage 4 here on Saturday.

Notwithstanding the medal-winning show, the performance exposed Indian archers' struggles under pressure in crunch situations.

The trio of Jyothi, Parneet Kaur, and 16-year-old debutant Prithika Pradeep, who had topped the qualification round with a total of 2116 points, looked well on course for gold and justified their top billing when they led 170-169 after the third end.

However, they faltered under pressure at the decisive moment, eventually going down 225-227 to Chinese Taipei.

In the mixed team event, the top-seeded Indian pair of Jyothi and Rishabh Yadav, who had shattered the qualifying world record with a total of 1431 points on the opening day, outwitted the 10th-seeded El Salvador duo of Paola Corado and Douglas Vladimir Nolasco 156-153 to claim bronze.

Jyothi had another shot at gold in the individual compound final but lost 147-148 to Britain's Ella Gibson. Earlier, she had edged Korea's Han Seungyeon 144-143 in the semifinals.

Parneet also missed out on a medal, going down 143-146 to Han in the bronze playoff.

In the gold medal match, Jyothi trailed from the start, going down 29-30 in the first end. —*PTI*

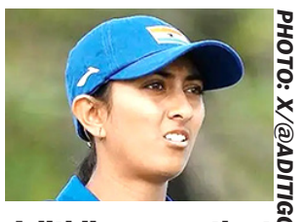
PHOTO: X/@ADITIGOLF

Aditi lies seventh at the halfway mark in Evian C'ship

AIX-LES-BAINS, 12 JULY

Aditi Ashok stayed in the top 10 with a solid round of two-under 69 to be tied seventh at the halfway mark at The Amundi Evian Championship, here.Aditi, who has never had a top-10 finish in her previous 34 Major starts, with rounds of 67-69 at the Par-71 Evian Resort Golf Club, now lies four shots behind the leader, South Korea's Somi Lee (67-65), who is 10 under par.Aditi started from the tenth and two birdies and one bogey on either side of the course. She birdied the 11th, 17th, 2nd, and the 7th and dropped shots on the 14th and the 6th.Aditi's best showing in a Major came at the 2024 Evian, when she was Tied-17th. This is her 19th cut in 35 Major starts. —*PTI*

Belgium beats Portugal for its first win

SION, 12 JULY

Janice Cayman scored in stoppage time for Belgium to beat Portugal 2-1 and a first win in its final game at the Women's European Championship on Friday. Amber Tysiak thought she had already scored Belgium's winner in stoppage time, but that goal was struck out for an offside call, the second Belgium goal ruled out after a VAR check. Portugal needed a win to have any hope of making the knockout stage, but got off to a bad start when Belgium captain Tessa Wullaert slid in to meet Jill Janssens' cross for the third-minute opener. "We go out of the tournament, but it's on a high," Wullaert said. "We deserved this after all the games we played. I don't think the luck was on our side, and even today, we got two goals canceled." More bad news for Portugal came from Bern, where Italy took a shock lead against tournament favorite Spain. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X/@AVINASH

Sable fails to finish in Monaco Diamond League

MONACO, 12 JULY

Seasoned Indian steeplechaser Avinash Sable failed to finish after suffering a nasty fall, but fast-rising sprinter Animesh Kujur continued his international growth by ending a creditable fourth in the Under-23 200m event of the Monaco Diamond League here. Olympian and national record-holder Sable was expecting a top-five finish in his favourite 3000m event but suffered a fall that resulted in visible discomfort quite early in the race on Friday night. The reigning Asian champion limped off the track, and the extent of his injury is not yet known.—*PTI*

Malaga withdraws as host city in 2030 World Cup bid

NEW DELHI, 12 JULY

Spanish city of Malaga on Saturday withdrew from being a host venue for the 2030 World Cup, to be held in Spain, Portugal, and Morocco.Spain had put forward 11 stadiums to be used, including La Rosaleda in the southern coastal city. However, Malaga mayor Francisco said hosting matches could cause problems for the city's club and fans, because of reconstruction work needed on the stadium."Choosing between the World Cup and the club, we choose the club and the fans," said De la Torre after a meeting with the Malaga council and the regional government of Andalusia. —*PTI*

Bayer Leverkusen signs Malik Tillman

LEVERKUSEN,12 JULY

Bayer Leverkusen has moved to replace Florian Wirtz by signing United States international Malik Tillman from PSV Eindhoven for a club-record fee.

The 23-year-old attacking midfielder signed a contract through June 2030, the Bundesliga club said Saturday.

Kicker magazine reported Leverkusen was paying PSV a fixed sum of 35 million euros ($41 million) for the player, making him the club's most expensive incoming transfer.

"We've gained another strong and very dangerous attacking player," Leverkusen sporting director Simon Rolfes said. —*PTI*

HAMSTRING NIGGLE

Nadeem wants to treat it before Chopra clash

KARACHI, 12 JULY

Pakistan's Olympic gold medallist javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem has suffered a "hamstring niggle" and he's travelling to England to treat the injury before his face-off with Indian superstar Neeraj Chopra at the Silesia Diamond League on August 16, according to sources.

A source close to Nadeem said the hamstring problem forced him to skip an event in Switzerland, and he is travelling to England on Monday to get the injury treated by specialists as well as prepare for the DL Meeting in Silesia, Poland. "The reason for going to England is to get the hamstring problem treated and also to train for the Diamond League," he said.

The source said that Nadeem will travel directly from England to Poland next month.

"This is also the reason why he (Nadeem) skipped an event in Switzerland as he doesn't want to take a risk with the hamstring niggle."

Chopra and Nadeem will be facing each other in Silesia for the first time after the mouth-watering men's javelin competition in Paris on August 8, 2024, when the Pakistani had beaten the Indian for the gold with a stunning 92.97m throw.

The men's javelin duel between the reigning world champion and reigning Olympic gold medallist is set to be one of the main attractions of the Silesia DL, more so after Chopra crossed the coveted 90m mark in Doha in his first DL competition of the year on 16 May. —*PTI*

IO 2025: Sreeshankar makes a strong return

MUMBAI, 12 JULY

M. Sreeshankar made a strong return to competition after a long injury lay-off with the Indian Open Athletics in Pune on Saturday.

His 8.05m best by an Indian this season won him first place in the meet at the Savitribai Phule University Sports Complex.

Sreeshankar last competed more than 650 days ago in the 2023 Asian Games in Hangzhou. He was forced to miss the 2024 Paris Olympics after he suffered a knee injury, which required surgery.

The 26-year-old started with 7.84m and improved it to 7.99m before he went past the 8m mark with his fourth jump, but missed the World Championships qualification mark (8.27m).

Sreeshankar is aiming to qualify for the World Championships later this year in Tokyo and keep himself in the mix for next year's Commonwealth Games and Asian Games.—*PTI*

India A men's team defeats France 3-2

EINDHOVEN, 12 JULY

The India A men's hockey team registered its third successive win on the ongoing European tour, going past France 3-2 here at the Hockey Club Oranje-Rood on Saturday.

For India, forward Aditya Arjun Lalge scored a brace, while Boby Singh Dhami completed the tally. Lalge hit the target first through a field goal before converting a penalty corner, while Boby too found the net later.

Clement scored both goals for France.

Reflecting on the third consecutive win, India A coach Shivendra Singh said, "The India A Men's Hockey Team has been working very hard behind the scenes in preparation for this tour, and it is great to see things working out as well as they have on the field.

"We have a few more games to go on this tour, and I am confident that the team will keep up the good work and build on the momentum." India A will again lock horns with France on Sunday.—*PTI*

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MEN'S ASIA CUP

Pakistan won't send hockey team to India

KARACHI, 12 JULY

Pakistan will not travel to India for the upcoming hockey tournaments over "security" concerns, government sources told AFP on Saturday, potentially jeopardising its place in next year's World Cup.

The nuclear-armed neighbours traded the worst violence in decades during a four-day conflict in May that killed 70 people.

Pakistan was due to participate in the Men's Asia Cup for field hockey to be hosted by India in August and September, for which the federation had sought the government's clearance.

"After the recent war, the security and safety of our hockey players will be at risk," said a sports ministry source, who asked not to be identified.

Pakistan will also not participate in the Junior World Cup in India in November, the source said.

Once a force in international hockey, with three Olympic gold medals and four world titles, Pakistan has slumped to 15th in the rankings.

Not featuring in the Asia Cup will likely cost Pakistan a place in next year's senior World Cup to be held in the Netherlands and Belgium.

A second government source also confirmed the decision to AFP.

Pakistan's foreign office has not responded to AFP's request for comment. —*PTI*

Wimbledon: Novak Djokovic planning return

LONDON, 12 JULY

Novak Djokovic wanted to make this much clear after losing to Jannik Sinner in the Wimbledon semifinals Friday: This was not a farewell performance. Djokovic intends to compete again at the All England Club.

"I'm not planning to finish my Wimbledon career today," the 38-year-old Djokovic said. "I'm planning to come back, definitely at least one more time."

His 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 defeat at Centre Court against the No. 1-ranked Sinner put an end to Djokovic's latest attempt to tie Roger Federer's men's record of eight championships at Wimbledon and to claim an unprecedented 25th Grand Slam title overall.

Djokovic was not fully able to compete at his best level, two days after taking what he described as a "nasty" and "awkward" fall in the last game of his quarterfinal victory. "I don't want to talk in detail about my injury and just whine about not managing to play my best," Djokovic said Friday. "I do feel disappointed that I just wasn't able to move as well as I thought or hoped that I would."

He was visited by a trainer before the third set for treatment on his upper left leg, won the next three games, and was a point from a 4-0 lead, but lost six of the last seven games. —*PTI*